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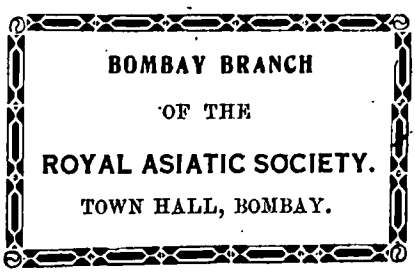

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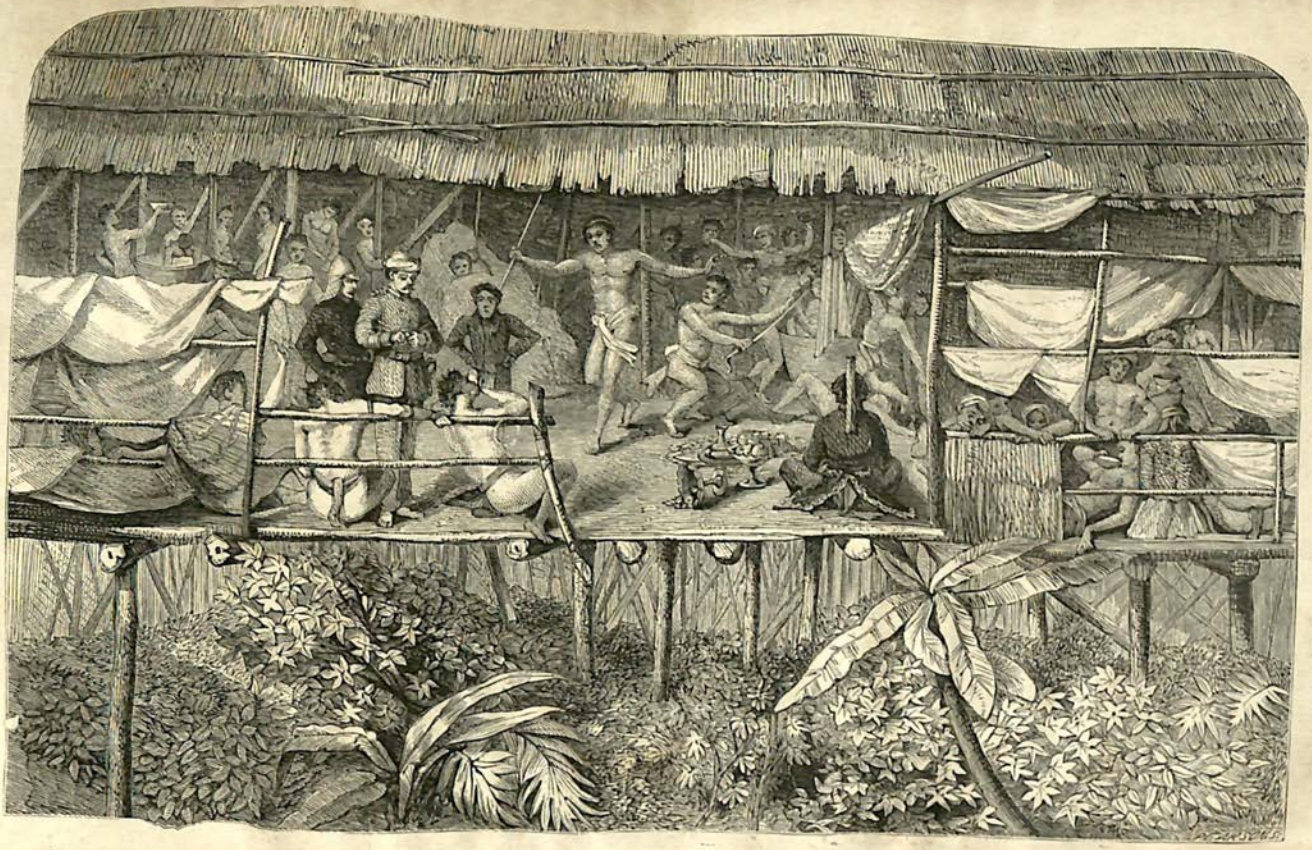

Gasing's Feast on the Batang Lupar.

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ADVENTURES

AMONG

THE DYAKS OF BORNEO.

SAKARRAN GIRL IN GALA COSTUME.

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ac.

BY

FREDERICK BOYLE, F.R.G.S.

Rx 214.

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TO

WALTER WATSON, Esq.,

RESIDENT OF SERIBAS,

AND TO THE OFFICERS OF THE SARAWAK GOVERNMENT,

THIS ACCOUNT OF A VOYAGE,

WHICH OWED MUCH OF ITS PLEASURE TO THEIR KINDNESS AND HOSPITALITY,

IS MOST GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated

BY

ARTHUR AND FREDERICK BOYLE.

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CHAPTER I.

Departure from England—Overland Route—Singapore—The *Rainbow*—Coast of Borneo—Kuching—Government House—Little Bungalow—Capture of the Old Fort by Chinese—Present Fort—Court House—Strange Custom—Singular Law-case—Church and Mission—Chinese Quarter—Appearance of the Malays—Costume—Amok Madness—Kling Campong—Malay Campong—Houses—Animals—Government—Inhabitants of Sarawak—Languages.

ON the first of February, 1863, my brother and myself commenced our voyage to Sarawak. At that date we quitted England, and in the beginning of April we embarked from Suez for the far East.

Surely no one can wish to hear anything of our journey by the Overland Route. The good ship in which we took our passage contained the usual assortment of Anglo-Indian characters. We found therein the old gentleman high up in the Civil Service, who guarded his pretty daughter like an Argus, making up in ferocity for his very ordinary vision; the nervous lady, suffering from cockroaches in the imagination; the amiable general, and his aid-de-camp haughtily affable; a crowd of ensigns escaped from dépôt; Manchester clerks going out

to China; such were our fellow-passengers. If ever an age existed in which balls, and newspapers, and serious flirtation enlivened the tedium of the Indian voyage, that happy time has passed. Eating, drinking, smoking, and mild gambling are the sole amusements at present to be anticipated, and these pastimes are not so novel as to deserve description.

After a month's voyage, broken only by the delay of twenty-four hours at Pointe de Galle, where we purchased rubies aud sapphires of coloured glass, and mistook the ipecacuanha bushes in the Cinnamon Gardens for groves of precious spices, we arrived in Singapore. An accident which had lately happened to Rajah Brooke's mail steamer, the *Rainbow* detained us here for nearly two months. Decidedly Singapore is the least sociable colony of England. No public amusement whatever exists there, and the English inhabitants rarely meet except in their warehouses or on horseback. Each family gives one dinner party in six months and a ball once a year; the military band plays three times a week upon the Esplanade; races occur once in the twelve months. The environs of the town are dangerously infested with tigers, and a mountain five miles distant is alive with them. Under these circumstances the community is naturally addicted to gin and grumbling, but nevertheless a traveller is sure to be hospitably received among them.

Assisted by kind friends, we entertained ourselves in the "City of the Tiger" as well as was humanly

possible until the *Rainbow* came out of dock and was ready for her return voyage. This pretty little steamer, which gained so much glory by carrying the Bishop of Labuan and his "Terry" in the action with the Illanun pirates in May, 1862, is about 100 tons in burden, and carries two twelve-pound guns. She is at present the only steamer bearing Rajah Brooke's flag, but a companion vessel is building in Singapore, and will shortly be launched. Besides the *Rainbow*, the Sarawak Government possesses two small gunboats, the *Venus* and the *Jolly Bachelor*, of which I shall have much to say hereafter. These are employed in protecting the coast, and in carrying despatches to the out-stations, while the *Rainbow* plies continually between Singapore and Kuching, bearing mails, passengers, and merchandise.

As soon as the repairs were completed we embarked, and on the third morning after leaving Singapore, Borneo was sighted. Although this island cannot boast the delicate beauty which her innumerable palm groves give to the coast of Ceylon, yet our first view of it was very striking. A chain of lofty mountains far inland hung like blue clouds along the horizon; as we approached the shore, a broad sandy beach was discerned dividing the blue waves from the dark forest; and along the coast were scattered vast masses of rock still encircled by the fleecy mists of dawn. These lofty islets were mostly uninhabited, but the rich

vegetation of the Tropics had clothed them from base to summit with a mass of soft foliage, and no spot in the world could present a picture more sunny and brilliant than one of these green hills surrounded by its circle of white surf.

Our course was steered towards a high wooded peak called Santubong, under which lies the mouth of the river Sarawak. The little Malay village nestling among rocks and palm-groves under the mountain was once a famous rendezvous of piratical squadrons, Illanuns, Sulus, and Seribas, but the bravest of them dare not now approach within a hundred miles of the spot. After passing this village we steamed up the river between banks rich in the luxuriant beauty of tropical vegetation. A hundred yards on either side extended a thick belt of mangrove, tenanted in that early morning time by many a rustling school of monkeys; beyond this the jungle rose like a wall, and stretched, unbroken except by river or ravine, as far as the unknown mountains which loomed on the horizon.

The chief town of Sarawak is called by the natives "Kuching," which signifies "the cat;" why they should give it this name I know not; by Europeans it is frequently called Sarawak, but as the country and the river have also that name, I will use the native appellation. The town lies about eighteen miles from the sea by the Santubong route, and twenty-five by the other channel of Maritabas. As far as Tanah Putih, where the Borneo Company

have a factory, there are few signs of habitation along the river, but when that spot is passed, houses begin to appear on the banks, boats become thicker on the water, until, on rounding the last reach, Government House appears on the one hand, the Chinese quarter and the fort upon the other, the *Rainbow* backs to her wharf, and at length the long, long voyage is fairly concluded.

If, without mentioning its breadth, I were to state that Kuching extends three-quarters of a mile along either bank of the river, I should give ideas of a magnificence to which the capital, prosperous though it be, has not yet attained; for, though such is indeed its length, the houses are rarely more than two or three deep, and, except in the Chinese quarter, are placed in any straggling position which the individual builder may fancy. As no census has ever been taken, it is only by a rough estimate, obtained from the returns of the hearth-tax, that Kuching is said to have eighteen thousand inhabitants.

Government House is situated nearly in the centre of the town, standing upon a small eminence overlooking the river. The building is in no way remarkable for the beauty of its architecture; indeed its high-pitched shingle roof and blue-painted walls of log are thought by some to present rather the opposite appearance. It is, however, cool, and airy, and comfortable, with ample room for all the Rajah's purposes. The ground-floor contains a

dining-room alone, with the necessary offices; upon the upper floor is the drawing-room, which no one ever enters except to muster for dinner. The broad verandah which encircles this floor is the usual idling place through the heat of the day. Here lie the latest English papers, reviews, and books, while the amateur in weapons can amuse himself with the examination of numerous "parangs," and swords, and shields, and war cloaks, hung upon the wall.

Below Government House, and standing some twenty yards from it, is a pretty little bungalow,* of which the ground-floor resembles a huge bird-cage, being entirely surrounded with lattice-work. It is set apart for the Rajah's visitors, and we were conducted thither on landing. From the verandah of this bungalow a delightful view is obtained. Between the trunks of the areca and cocoa-nut palms upon its bank appears the broad river and the picturesque houses of the Malay "campong" lining the further shore. Occasionally, a group of natives in their brilliant costume may be seen lounging on the wharf, or crossing in the ferry-boat to Government House; on the edge of the swift stream stands the pretty white fort bordered by a grove of cocoa-nut trees glittering in the fierce sun.

* A "bungalow" in the East is understood to signify a building raised from the ground upon posts, or of which the ground floor is not inhabited. A "house" has a first floor and a dining-room on the *rez-de-chaussée.*

Below the fort, the red-tiled roofs of the Chinese quarter rise over a thicket of slender masts, and, on the hill above, the houses of the Bishop and the Doctor display their painted gables among the encircling trees. The vast blue ridge of Matang is conspicuous among the distant mountains towering over the upper waters of the river, behind which, each evening, the sun sinks abruptly in golden splendour. Truly, to lounge in that verandah and watch the sunset upon Matang, was worth much travel.

The residence which the Rajah first built was burnt by the Chinese when they came down from the gold washings at Bow to seize the government; in the conflagration the valuable library which Sir James Brooke and his friends had collected perished completely, and this loss has not yet been repaired. The building stood upon an eminence divided from that on which the present Government House stands, by a small stream which, at high tide, becomes a river. Through this the Rajah dived when his residence was attacked, and on gaining the other bank, seized his own steward by the throat and was about to thrust him through with a sword, when his voice was fortunately recognised.

On the same night, so memorable in the history of Sarawak, the old fort upon the other side of the river was captured by the insurgents after a desperate resistance. It is now occupied by the trea-

surer, but the marks of Chinese axes upon the door of the closet in which Sir James Brooke's plate was formerly stored are still distinctly visible, and a new panel in the log wall is pointed out to the visitor as the spot where a round shot from the steamer *Sir James Brooke* passed, when, in their turn, the Chinese garrison was attacked.

When the assault was made the building contained only the former treasurer, Mr. Crymble, and a few Malay soldiers, who had charge of two prisoners and a madman. Considering the weakness of the garrison, it was decided to arm these three suspicious characters, and let them do what they could. All behaved admirably, but the madman was the hero of the scene. His ecstasy of delight at the noise, and the blood, and the confusion, showed itself in the wildest acts of bravery. When the position was evidently no longer tenable, most of the garrison being killed or disabled, the captain and another sane individual named Dout—at present a policeman in the Rajah's service—jumped from an embrasure, and cut their way through the Chinese. No remonstrances of theirs, however, produced any effect upon the madman. He was determined to hold the post as long as it would hold him, and he was last seen at the head of the stairs firing with undiminished energy among the insurgents, as they crowded into the fort. Possibly in the world's history, there have been more maniacs of this class than is generally suspected.

At present the verandah in which this poor fellow perished so bravely is tenanted by two "wa-wa" monkeys, the gentlest, tamest, and prettiest imaginable. The moat still exists round the house, which is now occupied by Mr. Houghton, the Treasurer, and his little monkeys are continually climbing and chattering among the crimson shoe-blossoms which line its banks. Clusters of a delicate white flower cover the stagnant water, and pink lotuses bloom along the edge, while a flock of brilliant Moscovy ducks quack and splutter among the plants, or take healthful exercise by waddling into the treasurer's doorway.

The present fort is a log building, and stands upon the river's edge opposite to Government House. It is surrounded by a deep but narrow moat, and though incapable of resistance for a moment against a European force, is, I should think, sufficiently defensible against any native attack; the more so as the whole country is in a state of profound tranquillity and contentment, so that one is at a loss to see from whence the assailants are to come. The building is occupied by the Tuan Resident, or, in Malay pronunciation, "Roseden," Mr. Crookshank, the third officer of the Government.

Behind the fort stands the Court House, a large shedlike structure, furnished with a table, half a dozen arm-chairs, forms around the walls, and, in the centre, two benches for the policemen, plaintiff,

and defendant. Here, in open court, all cases which the native chiefs find themselves unable to decide are tried by the Rajah or the Tuan Resident, assisted by the three Malay Datus, who give their opinion on the merits of the case and cite the customs of their ancestors.

Connexion with the reigning family is the only patent of nobility recognised in Borneo. The sons, brothers, and uncles of the Sultan of Bruni, are termed Datus or Pangērans, and this title is hereditary. The heir-apparent to the throne has the honorary title of Rajah Mudah, or young Rajah. In Sarawak, the three Datus who reside there are styled, respectively, Datu Patiínngi, Datu Bàndar, and Datu Tumàngong. The old pirate who formerly bore the latter title,—which strictly signifies, I believe, counsellor or vizier,—is now deceased, and his son, a young man of very different character, reigns in his stead. In connexion with the old man's death, we heard a story which illustrates a very singular social custom of the Malays. Although family ties are much regarded among them, propriety exacts that a death in their households should always be announced with an air of the greatest exhilaration, and when the young Tumàngong visited Government House to inform the Rajah of his father's decease, he entered the breakfast-room with the broadest possible grin upon the lower part of his face, while his eyes were choked with tears of real sorrow. The old Datu, pirate,

robber, and murderer though he was, possessed qualities which made him a favourite among the European residents, and among his own dependents.

Strange causes occasionally come into the Court House of this semi-civilized community; one, which most men would probably feel some hesitation in deciding, came under our own notice.

One evening, when the tide was at its highest, a Chinaman descended the river to the town, and moored his "sampan," or boat, to a tree by the water's edge in the middle of the bazaar. At a later hour of the night another Chinaman arrived in a boat laden with merchandise, which he anchored in the stream immediately below the boat of No. 1; for as the latter came at high tide, and No. 2 at low tide, there was a steep bank of mud between the two boats. Very shortly afterwards the scavengers came in the dawn to clean the streets; they found that boat No. 1 interfered with their duties in some manner, and incontinently cast off its moorings. In accordance with the law of gravity, boat No. 1 slipped rapidly down the mud, and, striking boat No. 2 amidships, sank her, merchandise and all. Who, then, ought to pay for the damaged cargo? Viewing the case according to common sense, it appeared that, since both Chinamen were in their right in mooring their boats where they did, no one was much to blame for an unfortunate accident. If a fault existed it seemed

to lie with the scavengers, who should have been more careful in casting off boat No. 1. This, however, was not the opinion of the court, which settles all cases in accordance with native customs so far as is possible, and the owner of boat No. 1 was condemned to pay all losses, inasmuch as his boat absolutely did the mischief.

On the left of the court-house runs the only high-road in the Sarawak territory; it continues about two miles into the country, terminating abruptly in the primeval jungle. It leads nowhere, and is merely used by the Europeans for horse exercise. An enormous wild boar haunts this road, and nightly crosses the bishop's path on his constitutional ride.

The church at Kuching was apparently built in a prophetic spirit, for it is a world too wide for its present congregation; but if the kind persons who subscribed to raise it could be transported from England, on a quiet Sunday afternoon, to see the result of their generosity, I think they would feel little inclined for regret. The pretty interior is the very ideal of a Metropolitan Mission Church; though why it should have been constructed according to the Gothic style of architecture passes comprehension. The congregation is at present so small that the heat is not very inconvenient, in spite of the little arched windows and single door; but it seems almost incredible that we English should transport the architecture of the chilly North to a land where the thermometer stands at 94° in the

shade. The arrangement of dwelling-houses in the far East is cool, graceful, and comfortable: a wide verandah surrounds the floor principally inhabited, and the overhanging eaves throw a shadow upon the whole interior; each apartment is provided with as many doors as can be devised, all of which open on to the verandah, and ensure a continual draught of cool air. Contrast this system, suggested by common sense and the exigencies of the climate, with the small windows and narrow portals of the Gothic church, and no residence in the tropics will be requisite to enable everyone to decide which is the more suitable.

We were told that before the Mission was established in Sarawak, the Malays were very loose in their observance of Mahomedan rites, and drank wine or broke any other of the prophet's laws as readily as a "fellah" on the Nile; but the coming of the missionaries seemed to rouse their pride, and I can answer for it that they now preserve the commandments of their religion under the greatest temptation. Under any circumstances, however, the English Mission must have benefited them, for surely the creed of Mahomet is better than none at all. But besides this advantage, which is perhaps open to theological objection, the clergy in Sarawak are performing a task of the very highest importance in educating native children, and in familiarizing distant Dyak tribes with the conveniences of Christian conduct and civilisation.

But truth compels me to state that throughout our travels we searched in vain for a single *adult* convert—Chinese, Malay, or Dyak. Just before our departure there was great triumph in Kuching over the conversion of the Orang Kaya of Lundu, a most powerful Dyak chieftain. If the worthy chief really knew what he was professing, such signal success is most gratifying; but our experience of the Dyak nature and intelligence would induce us to receive the report with the utmost caution. I say it without irreverence, but there is something almost ludicrous in the notion of a barbarous Dyak warrior comprehending or admiring the mysterious doctrines of the Christian faith.

It is also much to be lamented that throughout the farther East a very strong disinclination seems to exist against taking as servants boys educated in the Mission school.

Upon the left of the court-house lies the Chinese quarter, parallel to the river; in it are situated the principal shops and warehouses of the town. The houses, though very various in size, style, and decoration, present a tolerably level frontage to the muddy street, shadowed by cocoa-nut trees, which lies upon the river bank. All along the face of the bazaar is a colonnade about five feet wide, shaded from the glare upon the water by draperies hung from pillar to pillar. The shop is unprotected by glass or any other partition, and the stock-in-trade has a great tendency to overflow its proper

limits, and in sacks, baskets, and trays, to block the passage so as scarcely to leave room for purchasers to pass along the colonnade.

In this quarter is to be obtained almost every requisite of Eastern life—that is, if the customer's desires be not too expansive. Native dresses, cotton, silk, and gold-embroidered; Manchester prints, cutlery, fruit, edible birds'-nests, turtle-eggs, eatables of every sort; "krises," spears, sword-blades, wonderful old Dutch guns, of no use to anyone but the vendor; tarbooshes, Persian turbans, Kling caps of silk quilting, of fabulous value; mats, beds, arrack, gin, shot, gunpowder, paroquets, macaws, skins, poultry, and tobacco; all are piled up in the same shop, one above another, without order or convenience; while day and night large Chinese dogs, long-haired, mangy, covered with all uncleanness, loaf, and snarl, and snap about the purchasers' heels, or lie asleep in the pathway, stretched out at full length.

Passing thus through the Chinese quarter, or "Campong," jostled by perspiring coolies, politely made way for by neat-limbed Malays, stared at by wild Dyaks from the interior, after a walk of one hundred and fifty yards along the colonnade, the traveller reaches the fish-market, which is a new and thriving institution. It is, however, so thoroughly a tropical Billingsgate, in which barbarous fish are sold in an unknown language for an inconvenient coinage, as to be scarcely worth description. A

little further on are the offices of the Borneo Company, which may be called the limits of the town proper in this direction. These buildings are most useful and admirable, and the agents are very hospitable; but warehouses have much the same character wherever they may be met with, and Mexican dollars exhibit no marked peculiarities even when transported to Sarawak. I will not, therefore, describe any of these matters, but return through the bazaar to the Malay "Campong."

The bulk of the Kuching population is Malay. The Chinese residents are probably about 1000 in number, and the Hindoos about 500. No Dyaks inhabit the town, nor are they to be met with for some fifteen or twenty miles round. As a people the Malays of Sarawak are the ugliest I ever saw. Their skin is of a dirty yellow colour, and their features very Tartar-like in character; the nose is flat, eyes small and protruding, mouth coarse and shapeless. Their stature is very low, averaging five feet two or three inches; but they are powerfully built and much stronger than might be anticipated from their height. The women of the upper classes are very pretty,—or at least such is the opinion of English ladies who have visited them in their harems,—but among the ordinary population, it is rarely a female is seen even moderately good-looking. Possibly in consequence of this fact, they are not concealed with the jealousy usual in a Mahomedan community, nor do they wear veils of

any kind when abroad; it is true, we never, to our knowledge, met any females of the higher families in the street.

But the delicacy of limb, and the glorious hair usually found among eastern races, exists in perfection with the Malays. Although their movements are never cramped and confined as among the Chinese, I have seen many full-grown women whose feet were not the length of my hand; but the habit of walking barefoot destroys something of the graceful shape which nature moulded. Long and heavy black hair adorns the head of a Malay woman to a surprising age, and, with her small and regular teeth, would go far towards redeeming the plainness of her other features, were not the latter filed, and stained, and corroded with the juice of the Penang nut which she is constantly chewing.

The costume of the male sex is very simple but pretty, from its neatness of colour. It consists of a tight jacket of silk or cotton of a brilliant pattern, trousers usually white, a handkerchief for the head, and a "sarong" round the waist. This latter article is the distinctive feature of the Malay attire; it is made of silk or cotton, the pattern is always a tartan, and in shape it exactly resembles a wide sack with the bottom cut open. It is twisted around the body and looped up in graceful folds; the tying of his head handkerchief and the draping of his sarong are the great points of a

Malay "swell." But the costume of the "pangērans" or nobles, though the same in design, is much more brilliant and costly. When the head-handkerchief is not replaced by a Persian turban, it is adorned with a heavy fringe of gold lace; the jacket, trousers, and sarong, are stiff with gold embroidery, and over the latter is worn a "kain bandara" of cloth-of-gold. The hilt of the "kris" ornamented with jewels, or richly mounted in the precious metal, sticks out in front like the sword of an Albanian soldier, giving to their walk somewhat of the haughty swagger in which those warriors delight.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Malay nature is the strange madness called "amok," to which all individuals of this race are liable. Any strong passion may rouse the latent phrensy, and anger, revenge, or the discovery of a calumnious accusation, are frequent sources of deadly mischief. The gambling table sends out its homicides with regularity, but in nine cases out of ten, "la donna" will be discovered in the dressing room when the tragedy is over. The madman does not necessarily avenge himself upon his injurer; if that person should happen to be near when the fit comes on, he will be destroyed in the blind tempest of passion, but the "amok" does not seem to seek out his enemy in particular. He snatches up the first weapon that meets his eye, and dashes to the

nearest frequented spot, where he cuts and thrusts at every living thing until shot down like a mad animal.

Nevertheless courage, and the instinctive ascendancy of the white race, will produce their effect upon the most bloodthirsty "amok." A story is told in Singapore—for which I do not in the least vouch—of a certain doctor who, driving in his gig, encountered one of these maniacs flourishing a bloody parang. The doctor stopped, jumped out, and advanced to meet the man, armed only with his whip. The "amok" hesitated and dropped his weapon; his pursuers came up, put him into the gig, and carried him in triumph to jail. Supposing that this story be true I should recommend no one to make it a precedent.

The more reasonable method of dealing with these terrible madmen seems to be that pursued in Sarawak, where they are instantly shot down. That their condition is voluntary to a certain extent, has been accepted as a principle both of English and native law, and by either the criminal is condemned to death. How far the Malay is to be pitied rather than blamed in regard to this phrensy, is a question on which exists the greatest possible difference of opinion, but when the sluggish Chinaman claims to be inoculated with it, there can be no doubt that he is a vile impostor. I have in my possession a Bugis knife with which a Celestial

lover took upon himself to run "amok" through the bazaar of Kuching, after stabbing to death his mistress and her slave. He was treated without ceremony as a commonplace murderer.

The innumerable anecdotes of "amoks" current throughout the Malay countries, are never destitute of a lively interest. While we were detained at Singapore, news came from Sumatra of the death of a young Rajah and six of his pangērans, killed by an uncle who had failed in some court intrigue. Another instance occurred some years ago, of a sailor who ran "amok" in a vessel in the harbour, and forced all the crew to jump overboard for their lives. He was shot by a boat's crew sent from an English man-of-war at anchor off the town. It must be admitted that the possibility of encountering a murderous maniac at any moment imparts to the bazaars of Sarawak an element of excitement of which they are naturally destitute.

On the right of the Court House at Kuching, lies the small campong of the Klings. These people, of Hindoo birth, are common in Penang and Singapore, and throughout the Straits settlements; in colour they are very black, but their features are regular and delicate. Another Hindoo race has many representatives in Sarawak. These latter have a soft brown skin, tall figures, and handsome faces. Both races possess great aptitude for trade, and several of those resident

in Kuching have considerable wealth. Their houses resemble those of the Malays.

After passing the Kling quarter, the Malay campong is reached, extending for a great distance along either bank of the river. The houses are raised on piles varying in height from three to six feet. The walls are of wood, or more frequently of ataps, a species of thatch made from the leaves of the nipa palm. This tree supplies half the necessaries of life to the natives of the far East. It grows in large fields upon the water's edge, and thrusts out its leaves or branches twenty feet in length, like a huge fern from the root. These leaves when young are an excellent vegetable, and when old are woven into thatch; dried, they make cigarettes, matting, and hats; from the root, sugar or salt is extracted, according to the process,—for the Malays use their magnificent sugar-canes solely as a sweetmeat; in addition to the other uses of this noble palm, I have seen a native boat's crew hoist nipa leaves as sails, and make capital way with them in a fresh breeze.

Malay and Dyak houses are built upon piles for many reasons; of which, perhaps, the principal is that such was the custom of their ancestors. This first cause, all-sufficient among Oriental peoples, has its full weight in Sarawak. But independently of this, the architecture has advantages which are indisputable. In a country where the use of the bow

is unknown, it is difficult to fire a house, built of thatch though it be, which is raised twenty or thirty feet from the ground; and only among tribes liable to sudden invasion is this height ever attained. The elevation of the flooring also protects the inmates from inundation, and from the attacks of reptiles, both very common plagues in Borneo. The empty space under the building is also convenient for the disposal of rubbish, and thereby the natural indolence of the people is fostered; in a very old house, such as is frequently met with among the Dyaks, the piles are nearly buried beneath accumulations of earth, and the backs of the pigs rootling among the débris almost brush the flooring. Of course the Malays, as strict Mussulmans, never allow these animals to approach their dwellings, and I speak of the Dyaks only in this respect.

A footpath alone winds among the palm trees, and stranded boats, and straggling houses, which line the river bank in the native quarter. All porterage is done by "coolies," for no beasts of burden whatever exist in Sarawak. There are eight horses in the town, belonging to the European residents; an agent of the Borneo Company has also imported a pony to Muka, an extensive town upon the coast. This pony was the first specimen of the equine species that had been seen in those parts, and for some weeks numbers of natives came each morning to see if his horns had not sprouted

in the night. None of the larger carnivora are found along the seaboard of Borneo, but among the mountains of the interior exists a large panther, pieces of whose skin are the invariable ornament of the "parang ilang," the Dyak weapon. The Kyans, the most savage and powerful of the aboriginal races, among whom alone this panther is found, make war-cloaks of the skin. Numbers of wild cats, musangs, and tiger cats, inhabit the jungles, but they are too small to be dangerous to human beings.

Bears of the small honey species are very common, and a young one, the drollest little pet possible, can be bought for twenty cents. When full-grown, however, these animals are dangerous playthings; they are irritable, and take great delight in a kind of rough sport by no means agreeable to their masters. Buffaloes and wild cattle are found in the plains of the far interior; but they are nowhere common. There are also faint rumours, generally disbelieved, of elephants in the jungles of the South East.

The province of Sarawak was granted absolutely to Sir James Brooke by the Sultan of Bruni; but the Rajah has now settled his own authority upon a constitutional basis. The Council, which decides all points of internal administration, consists of seven members, four of whom *must* be natives. The three English members are—The Rajah, The Tuan Mudah, and the Resident of Kuching. The title of the heir-apparent, who holds the second

place in the Council, was formerly "Rajah Mudah," or "young Rajah," but since the retirement of Captain Brooke, who held that position, this dignity has been disused. Mr. Charles Johnson-Brooke retains the title of Tuan Mudah," or "young Lord," which he bore when his brother, Capt. Brooke, was the Rajah Mudah. The usual residence of the Tuan Mudah is at Sakarran, from whence he controls the warlike Sea Dyaks, who regard him with the greatest reverence and affection. Capt. Brooke, and Mr. C. Johnson-Brooke are the nephews of the Rajah, whose name they have assumed. A third brother, Mr. Stuart Johnson, is the Assistant-Resident of Seribas, and enjoys the title of "Tuan Bonsu." Bônsu is the Malay equivalent for the French "cadet," and is applied to Mr. Stuart Johnson as the youngest of the brothers.

The spiritual world of Sarawak is regulated by Dr. MacDougal, the Bishop of Labuan. As the sovereignty of Sir James Brooke had not been recognised at the time of our visit,* no Bishop could be directly nominated to that country; but this difficulty was bridged over by the appointment of a Bishop to Labuan,† who, it was understood, need not reside strictly within his diocese.

* The recognition has at length taken place since our return, and an English consul has been appointed to reside in Kuching.

† Whatever may be the spiritual needs of Sarawak, the natives of the small island which forms Dr. Mac Dougal's

In order that the following pages may be understood without difficulty, I will briefly describe the different races of Sarawak with whom the traveller comes in contact.

As seems to be the case in every country where they are encountered, the Malays of Borneo are immigrants. They inhabit the towns and villages upon the sea-coast, obtaining a careless subsistence by fishing and trading in a small way. Their religion, as I have before remarked, is Mahomedanism of a strict form. The number of their Hadjis or Mecca pilgrims increases yearly with the increasing security, and the arrogance which these devotees assume on returning from the sacred journey may at some time cause the Sarawak government considerable difficulty. Among these Mussulmans polygamy is of course permitted, but it is rarely practised; this moderation, however, may

ostensible see, certainly are in more urgent need of religious instruction than the manly Dyaks. These savages of Labuan have a fearful custom of digging up the English dead after interment. Ladies have been known to prefer casting the corpses of their children into the sea, rather than risk the carelessness of the watch at the burial-ground. The object of this horrible desecration is still utterly unknown, in spite of vigilance and research. The natives will put themselves to the greatest toil and danger to disinter the body, and to restore it to its grave after some hours' interval. No alteration whatever can be discovered in the appearance of the corpse after its re-interment, except sometimes a slight derangement of the grave-clothes. In conversation with the natives they deny the hideous charge with indignation, but the cases have been too frequent to admit of doubt.

be attributed not so much to any instinctive morality as to the poverty of the population. The first use which a nobleman or merchant makes of his earnings in the wealth now beginning to enter the country, is to purchase as many wives as he can afford to maintain. The Malay character is represented in Europe as treacherous and bloodthirsty, but the opinion of the residents in Singapore, and of other disinterested witnesses, seems to be that they possess these evil qualities in a less degree than most Asiatic nations.

The various tribes of Dyaks, who are far the most numerous of the five aboriginal races of Borneo, are divided into two classes, differing from each other in habits and character alone. The Land, or, as they are sometimes called, the Hill Dyaks inhabit the interior of Sarawak proper; the Sea Dyaks occupy the coast and the banks of the larger rivers. The former are poor, laborious, and, though not absolutely cowardly, much more inclined towards peace than war. Until recent years, the latter spent their whole time in forays by land or sea, collecting plunder and human heads. Their agricultural labour was performed by slaves, who, however, were treated with great kindness. The existence of a people absolutely devoid of any faith in an overruling Providence has been frequently denied, but I believe that the Dyaks, who are far from being low-placed in the scale of humanity, have really no belief in this sublime and

consoling doctrine. The reader will find more upon this matter hereafter.

The language of the Bornean Malays is the pleasant but imperfect idiom of their continental kindred. But the Sarawak dialect is very different in pronunciation from that soft accent of Singapore, which has been called the "Italian of the East." There is a harshness about the former very unpleasant to the refined ears of Singapore. Like the English, the Malay shows a singular aptitude to adopt words from any language to express the necessities of those who speak it. Arabic, Hindoo, Persian, even Chinese and English, are all laid under contribution to enlarge the Malay vocabulary, and probably one-half of its words are derived, with scarcely an alteration, from a foreign source. It may also be said of this language, to a greater extent than of our own, that it has no grammar or accuracy whatever. I speak of the dialect current in ordinary life; the "pangēran Malay," which is used—by those who understand it—upon great and solemn occasions, possesses grammar and complication enough, but is not more accurate, either in gender, case, or number of nouns, or mood, or tense, or person of verbs, than is the conversational idiom in more general use.

The language of the Dyaks is considered by those who understand it to be distinct from the Malay. Nevertheless a strong resemblance appears to exist between the two; as strong, perhaps, as

between the broadest Yorkshire and sharp Cockney. Every Malay can converse with a Dyak, and even we ourselves were sometimes comprehended. However this be, certainly two, if not three distinct aboriginal* languages exist in Sarawak besides the Dyak, viz., Kennowit, which is allied with the Kyan, Milanowe, and perhaps Pakatan. The only officer of Rajah Brooke's government who understands the Kennowit language is now, I believe, engaged in compiling a vocabulary of it, which will be very valuable. The Milanowe language is almost extinct, and this race has adopted the tongue of the Malays, with their costume and mode of life.

* I use the word "aboriginal," here and elsewhere, in reference to the inhabitants of the country other than Malays, Chinese, Tambies, Javanese, and the hundred tribes and races which, though numerous in Borneo, can be identified as immigrants from a foreign land. Perhaps the true aboriginal inhabitants of Borneo are the semi-human Pakatans, who, however, are said to bear a great resemblance to the Kyans, though more finely formed and fairer in complexion.

CHAPTER II.

Unfortunate Accident—Action with Chinese Insurgents—Belida Fort—Malay Cats—Rapids—River Scenery—Grogo—Sow Dyaks—Their Appearance—Costume—Houses—Deer-stalking—Walk to Nawang—Dyak Path—Fire Ant—Return to Buso.

OUR two months' detention in Singapore was the more unfortunate in that it caused us to miss the best season for travel in Borneo, and the rainy monsoon was at hand when we reached our destination. Already the Dyaks were preparing their land for the rice crop, and our chance of sport grew daily less. Under these circumstances we lost no time in seeking a boat and crew to take us up the river. The agent of the Borneo company, with his usual kindness, relieved us of our difficulties by the loan of a large "sampan" with its complement of men, and after three days' stay in Kuching, we started one morning in great excitement and pitch darkness for the deer grounds of Grogo, in the territory of the Sow Dyaks, who inhabit the right branch of the Sarawak river. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon we reached the fort of Belida, formerly an important out-station, but now abandoned to the care of an old man and a little dog. The

Rajah's frontier has extended so far beyond its original limits that his early forts have become useless, and they are mostly dismantled.

At a little distance below Belida an angle of the river was pointed out to us as Tanah Leda, where a brilliant engagement took place between the loyal Malays and the Chinese, during the insurrection of the latter. As I have no wish to write a history of that war, I will only briefly describe the action.

After burning Kuching the Chinese retired up the river to this place, and there raised a stockade which they fortified with the cannon captured in the town, and with numerous jingals. Their artillery was trained on the river, and it appeared certain that any hostile craft approaching must be blown to pieces.

The Datu Bàndar* and his Malays, coming round the point in pursuit, suddenly beheld the stockade crowded with enemies. They drew their sampans together out of range, and held a short council. The opinions were mostly in favour of prudence, but a Seribas man, who happened to be present, finally succeeded in imparting so much of the warlike spirit of his tribe, that it was determined to attack the position.

To avoid the storm of balls, the sampans separated as much as the width of the river would permit. When all was complete, the Malays raised

* One of the three hereditary nobles of Sarawak.—(See Chapter 1.)

their yell of assault, and dashed through the water. All the guns were fired rightly enough, but so sudden was the attack, that the bullets passed idly overhead, and ricochetted into the jungle. With their usual stupidity and self-confidence, the Chinese had made no preparations whatever for the event of an enemy's landing. In a moment the stockade was carried, and the Malays were in their very midst. It is difficult to conceive a being upon two legs more clumsy than a Chinaman. His great strength seems to avail him little in a fight, and his fat, awkward limbs are at the mercy of any active antagonist who can keep out of his grasp. With terrible loss, the insurgents fled up the hill of Peninjow, and there raised another stockade. Next day a party of Malays and Dyaks attacked the new position, but were repulsed with loss.

Nevertheless, the Chinamen could not well take up a permanent abode on the top of Peninjow, and they were finally compelled to retreat through the jungle towards Sambas. In this march their sufferings were fearful. Every Dyak house on the route has its bunch of Chinese heads taken at this time, and, if the Tuan Mudah had not recalled his warriors, not a soul of the rebels would have reached the Dutch settlements. When the Sarawak Dyaks ceased the pursuit, they were already several days' march over the Sambas frontier.

Belida Fort is a very extraordinary building. As far as we could ascertain, it is constructed upon the

same principle as Professor Anderson's inexhaustible bottle, for the stranger wanders from room to room, round and round the building, but never finds his point of departure. Each chamber leads into every other, and no one can find the right door. The old man in charge had a lost sort of air, and no persuasion could induce his little dog to quit the verandah. Evidently it had done so in its younger days, and had suffered an agony of starvation in consequence, from which it had not yet recovered. There was also a cat residing in this enchanted building. The expression of reckless bewilderment about this animal's eyes was very distressing; she was of the Malay species, and had a knot in her tail, as have all the cats of the far East. Why this singular deformity should be thus perpetuated is a very interesting question. It cannot be a natural formation, because no two specimens have it in the same form or degree. In some it is a mere bunch in the midst of the tail; in others the tail ends abruptly in a twisted knot; in others there is, strictly speaking, no tail at all, but a round mass of clotted hair; in others the tail strikes off at a right angle in the middle. This latter deformity is more frequently seen in kittens half-English and half-Malay.

We passed the night at Belida Fort, and occupied the hours of darkness in hunting for our bedrooms, with the assistance of the old man and his little dog. As to the cat, she skirmished around, and appeared at unexpected moments. With the

first light we reimbarked, and endeavoured to get some sleep.

The river was low, and rapids numerous. The ascent of the latter was very exciting. The water foamed and roared, the boatmen shouted and laughed, the steersman screamed, the sampan rocked and dipped, the water dashed in, and we yelled. But if an accident had happened I suppose things would have been much more exciting; for at the bottom of each rapid lay a long still pool, and huge green alligators were paddling about therein waiting for their prey.

We were told, also, that there was an abundance of sharks in the river, although at that distance from the sea it was perfectly fresh. They have been found in the Rejang hundreds of miles above high water-mark.

Soon after sunrise, the branch of the river we ascended became so narrow that the vast jungle trees nearly met overhead, and we sailed under a triumphal arch of verdure. But between the thick-growing trunks and tangled branches, flashes of light sparkled along the water and lit up the varied foliage of the banks. Nearly every tree was loaded with orchids, and great frills of fern spread out around each branch. Although the best season for flowers was already passed, there were still a few trees and lianas in bloom, among which a tall shrub, hung with festoons of pale purple blossom, was conspicuous. But the general colour of the foliage was

dull and sombre, though we occasionally met with a tree of very gay appearance, boasting leaves of light and brilliant green, and branches of vermilion.

At Grogo, where we were to remain, the river had dwindled down to a small stream, about thirty feet wide. We were assured, however, that a distinct species of alligator is found here only three feet long. Whether this be strictly true, or whether the specimens captured are merely young ones of the ordinary species, we leave to others to decide, as our endeavours to secure one were fruitless. In the tree to which we moored our boat lived two tiny striped squirrels, not larger than a common mouse, who watched our proceedings all day with the greatest curiosity.

The Sow Dyaks, who inhabit Grogo, are a land tribe, by no means resembling the bold warriors who occupy the Seribas and Sakarran rivers. In height few among the Sows are over five feet three, but they are powerfully built, and their muscles are like iron. There is, however, a miserable down-trodden look about them which some generations of just government will scarcely destroy. They are very poor and very dirty; the chowat—sole article of male apparel—is seldom of richer materials than the inner bark of a tree, and the tumble-down houses, the listless faces of the men, and, more than all, the dreary expression of the young girls, tell of centuries of oppression.

The costume of the men consists merely of the

"chowat," a piece of cloth or bark about five feet long, twisted round the waist and between the legs, the ends hanging down before and behind. A wretched handkerchief wrapped round the head, a "parang latok"* by the side, a quaint knife with a short blade and a long curved handle, two boxes of bamboo containing "penang," flint and steel, and other small conveniences, slung to the "chowat,"—such is the equipment of a Land Dyak, and if to the above be added a spear and a few brass rings, the picture of a Sow in full dress will be complete.

The women wear a "bedang," or short petticoat, of thick woollen material, falling from the waist to the knees. Their bodies are ornamented and defended by an immense number of brass rings from below the breasts to the upper part of the petticoat, which is retained in its place by them. When the Dyak lover attempts to pass a tender arm round his sweetheart's waist, instead of the soft flesh, he finds himself clasping a cuirass of solid metal. Nor is this all: for fashion ordains that the Dyak heiress shall invest her available means in the purchase of long gauntlets of twisted brass wire reaching from the knuckles to the elbows; and if in her turn she encircle her lover's neck with a responsive arm, the wretched man finds himself clasped by a horrible fetter, which draws a little bit of his flesh between

* The "parang latok" may be called the national weapon of the Sarawak Malays and of the Land Dyaks. It is fully described hereafter.

each of its links, and pinches him fearfully. For these reasons, caresses are not common among Dyak lovers; after all, perhaps they are only a habit.

But apart from their inconvenience, these brazen ornaments are decidedly tasteful and pretty. The ordinary colour of a Dyak girl, when she does not stain her body with turmeric, is a dull brownish yellow, and the sparkling brass rings are a great relief to this complexion. They are not removed at night, nor, in fact, during the woman's lifetime, unless she outgrow them.

The Sow villages are not built on the same fixed system as those of the sea tribes. A few families live under the same roof, with partitions of boards and thatch between the chambers; but of such buildings there are many in the village, whereas among the sea Dyaks the whole clan, however numerous, lives in one house, in which each family possesses a chamber. A building of this class among the Banting tribe was found on measurement to be over 1000 feet long.

The piles upon which the houses are built at Grogo are not more than seven or eight feet high; but the village stands upon a hill, and is in little danger from inundations. Its population might be about three, or perhaps four hundred, which is considerable among the Land Dyaks. But there is an air of misery about the place and its inhabitants; their "pangaran," or head-house, was tumbling to pieces at the time of our visit, and we could not find

an enemy's skull in the village. Evidently when men cease to remember their own courage, or to regard the trophies of their fathers' prowess, they must consider their condition hopeless.

The apartment of the "Orang Kaya," or "head chief," was little superior to others of the clan. A rough ladder, being merely the trunk of a young tree notched along its sides, rested against the edge of the broad verandah in front of the hut. Through a low door we passed into the house, which was crammed with old women and dirty children stark naked. On each side the entrance was a tall wooden framework much like the wooden plate-racks which still remain in a few old-fashioned kitchens. On the lowest range of the rack was a large flat stone, on which, in spite of the terrible heat, a lively fire was burning; on the range above was wood, and rice, and utensils; on the top was piled up a heap of the nondescript necessaries of savage life.

This was the only article of furniture proper in the apartment. The walls were covered with plates and dishes of a gaudy colouring, each suspended in a little ratan basket; this display of crockery is invariable in a Dyak house. The manufacture is English or Dutch.

The height of the chamber was about seven feet. From the rafters overhead were hung weapons, brass girdles, old "bedangs," strings of charms—boars' tusks and alligators' teeth—mats, mosquito

curtains horribly dirty, half-woven chowats, in short, all the property of the family not at that moment upon their wretched persons. The floor was composed of loose sticks and bamboos placed at intervals of an inch over the beams of the house. Part of it was covered with mats of ratan. The apartment was about eighteen feet by fifteen, and eight or ten people slept therein all night, and ounged all day.

No such luxury as a chimney was known, although the fires burnt night and day, but at the further end of the chamber a rude window was cut out of the sloping roof, and when this was carefully propped open with a stick, it permitted a little fresh air to penetrate. This window was the more necessary, as, when it was closed, the family were instantly enveloped in pitchy darkness.

The Orang Kaya was absent visiting a neighbouring village, but we had no difficulty in procuring a guide to the deer-grounds of the vicinity. As soon as our wishes were translated into the Dyak idiom, a stout little fellow sprang up from the floor on which he was squatted, hastily refilled his mouth with penang, selected a spear, and expressed himself ready to conduct us whithersoever we would. The sun was already near its setting when we set out, pursued by a chorus of advice from all the old women of the clan.

After a quarter of an hour's walk through the

jungle, we reached the foot of a hill. Suddenly our guide threw himself on the ground and whispered, "Rusa Tuan!" two words which comprised all his knowledge of the Malay language. After an attentive examination of the jungle upon the hillside, Arthur made out the head of a doe some three hundred yards off. How the Dyak, without the aid of a glass, could detect this speck above the brushwood, we could not at all understand, but we had many subsequent opportunities of marvelling at the power of sight possessed by these savages.

The buck was not visible, and the doe's head was rather a small target in the vague light of sunset; but as our guide assured us we could approach no nearer, and the game seemed already restless, Arthur took aim, fired and missed. We walked some distance further along the hilltops, but returned to our boat at dusk, without finding more game.

This, our first night camp, was picturesque enough. We built a huge fire of logs, which threw a red gleam upon the river, and lighted up the very tops of the great jungle trees. Our Malay boatmen crouched up close to the blaze, and spent the evening in singing monotonous songs in a nasal falsetto. Naked Dyaks from the village above came down to stare at us, and stalked about indistinctly in the hazy background. Even our Chinese cook, in spite of his ghastly complexion

and shapeless features, looked appropriate as he superintended the big pots slung over the fire.

We started at sunrise next morning, to reach Nawang, a famous deer-ground lying about six miles from Grogo. To walk six miles across country in England is a very small feat, but Borneo is still innocent of road commissioners and model fences. One mile there is not to be traversed without a certain amount of fatigue, and a six-mile walk is rather a serious undertaking. A jungle path among the Dyaks is constructed in this wise. When all parties are finally satisfied that the road in question is absolutely necessary, the males of the clan fell trees along the whole route to be traversed, and the logs, when shorn of their branches, are disposed end to end. They then are, or ought to be, raised from the ground upon tressles or stumps, but this supererogatory labour is frequently omitted. The series of logs is carried as the crow flies, over river, abyss, and morass, up hill and through valley, till it reaches the village or rice-ground which necessitated the communication. On the whole, therefore, a stroll through the jungle over a Dyak road presents such difficultics, not to say dangers, as effectually deter most Europeans from attempting it whenever it can be avoided.

Nevertheless, there was no way to Nawang except over the "batangs," as these logs are called, and of this we had been warned in Kuching. Accordingly we put a bold face upon the unknown

dangers we were about to encounter, and started at sunrise accompanied by two guides. There were several streams and ravines on the way which caused us to feel very curious about the head, and it will readily be believed that to walk over the rocky bed of a dry river upon a round log forty feet long, and unprovided with any possible balance or support, was not altogether the kind of exercise to be preferred by any one not a professional dancer on the tight rope. However, with many a slip and tumble, we at length arrived at our destination, our clothes dripping with perspiration, and tired in mind and body. We subsequently became more accustomed to these "batang" paths, but no Englishman can ever overcome his natural feeling of giddiness so far as to encounter them when any other means of reaching his destination presents itself.

At Nawang we inhabited a deserted house in the centre of an old rice clearing. It was a mere shell. The roof had tumbled in, and the walls had tumbled out. The floor had fallen through, and the hearth was full of thick growing shrubs. Everything had gone to ruin, for the Dyaks allow their paddy fields to lie fallow for a long time, and this one had not been used for four or five years.

Selecting that portion of the building which still retained some fragments of its flooring of sticks, we spread our rugs and went to sleep immediately. But the floor, as I have said, was composed of

rough sticks laid without fastening over the beams. Each stick was provided with a number of sharp ends and broken twigs, which pierced our wearied flesh. After short slumbers, we arose to survey the sky through the vast rents of the roof; to enjoy the scenery through the utter absence of walls; and to contemplate the ground beneath us through the gaping interstices of the flooring.

The day passed on; it grew hotter and hotter as the hours dragged by, till, when Nature could bear no more, the air began to cool and cool, until the sun touched the tree-tops upon the opposite hill, and the faint belling of the deer reached us from the other side of the clearing. Then we strapped on our belts, looked to our rifles, and sallied out, accompanied by our Malays and Dyaks. Over the clearing we advanced in single file, over hills and through pathless jungle till dusk came on, but not a deer did we see, though they could be heard plainly enough. At length we gave the word "home," and, after a merry supper, went to bed on the floor.

The same night our Dyaks started in pitch darkness to return to Grogo, for no offers of money would persuade them to stay longer from home at the time of the rice-sowing. I presume they reached the village in safety, as we never heard the contrary, but by what instinct they crossed the ravines and marshes at night, without accident, passes comprehension. Like all Dyaks, they were good-tem-

pered, willing fellows, but their curiosity was insatiable, and their wild eyes were never removed from our movements.

Two more of our boatmen arrived the same evening, bringing books, which enabled us to pass the long hours of dull heat in greater comfort. When evening came again, we decided to walk in different directions in search of game.

As soon as we had crossed the clearing, I perceived a fine buck on the side of a hill at a distance of about 400 yards. To reach him it was necessary to pass a belt of jungle which lay directly between us. When we had penetrated about half-way through the tangled brushwood I struck a fern with my head. The next moment a pain shot across my cheek as if a red-hot iron were thrust through it. I screamed with the sudden agony; and when the Malay, who was behind, saw the cause, he seemed half-inclined to run away. In striking the fern I had shaken down a "sumut api,"* or fire-ant, the most terrible torment of the jungle. With the presence of mind, which this sagacious insect never loses, he bit my cheek instantly. After this adventure, it was of little use to look for my deer, which is still, I hope, happily browsing upon the brushwood at Nawang.

* The "sumut api" is a small red ant, fortunately rather uncommon. Its bite is fearful, though not venomous, and the pain soon passes. An army of natives would not hesitate to run from these little torments.

Arthur had no better sport; but he was not attacked by a "sumut api." On his way home, he shot in his exasperation a gigantic moor-hen, three or four times as large as the English species, though resembling it in other respects.

Hunting without Dyaks in Borneo is much like shooting without dogs in England, and we prepared to return to Grogo. I had wounded my heel with a bamboo-spike—one of the plagues of jungle travel—and our progress was slow in consequence. We did not fall more than ten times each, and reached our destination in comparative comfort.

Towards afternoon we reimbarked in our sampan, after distributing our present of beads and tobacco, and sketching a few of the natives.

CHAPTER III.

Climate of Sarawak—Merriment of the Malay Character—Swimming—Proboscis Monkeys—Buso—Boatmen's Joke—Lumbong Angin—Bidi—Hospitality of Mr. Bentley—Unhealthiness of Bidi—Poisoning with "Tuba"—Caves of Bidi—Edible Birds' Nests—Night at the Caves—Butterflies—Snakes—Flowers—Blue Orchid—Dyak Bridge—Krokong—Tabooed House—"Parang Ilang"—Dyak Climbing—Modes of Striking Fire—Antimony Mines—Gold Washing—Chinese Marriages—Arrival of H.M.S. *Rifleman*—Departure for Kennowit.

THOUGH the climate of Borneo has the tropical division of dry and rainy seasons, yet neither of these is usually so severe nor so long-continued as to cause inconvenience to the inhabitants. In the dry season there is a sufficient fall of rain; and the heat does not vary to any considerable extent. In the rainy months two or three showers only—very heavy indeed while they last, but of short duration—are on an average to be expected in the twenty-four hours. What we call a "wet day," is almost unknown in this fortunate climate.

But for some time previous to our arrival in Sarawak no rain had fallen. Though this did not cause inconvenience to the people, as their rice was not yet sown, yet the river had sunk so low in con-

sequence of the drought, that on our return we found it necessary to lift the sampan continually over shallows and dry rocks. But the delight of our boatmen at this extra labour was intense; every moment one or two of them leapt overboard, and often the whole crew was splashing, and laughing, and yelling in the water. The practical joke of snatching the punt-pole out of the holder's hands at the moment of the greatest strain, thereby causing him to fall headlong into the river, was received with the broadest glee on both sides. Then the sampan was pushed on with all haste, and when the victim of the joke appeared above the water, shaking back his snaky black locks, he found a long swim necessary to regain his place. Then ensued a merry race between the boat and the man, in which the latter always had the best of it, for at the end of each pool was a shallow, and we were all overboard again.

The Malays seldom swim upon the chest as we do; and I never once saw a native upon his back in the water. Their usual manner is that which we call "hand over hand," or porpoise-swimming, and their speed is most surprising. It is a pity that this mode is not more cultivated in England. Its rapidity is three or four times that of the ordinary chest or side or back swimming, and, though awkward at first, is found after a while to be quite easy, and much more graceful than the ordinary style.

As we descended the river it gradually became deeper, and we were able to keep our places in the sampan. There was little shooting; I obtained a few birds, and Arthur shot a couple of proboscis monkeys. These were the first, and, indeed, the last of that species we saw, for they are by no means common. When the two killed were brought on board, they certainly seemed to be most extraordinary animals.

The nose of the female projects from the face at a very acute angle, while that of the male hangs down over the chin. The fur is very pretty: of a sandy red colour on the back and sides, softening into white along the belly. The female we obtained was quite young; she was about ten inches long, and stood the same height upon her slender legs; her tail was about a foot long. The male was nearly double these proportions, but neither of them were more than half-grown.

If anyone should deem that an excuse is necessary for shooting these animals I may here observe that my brother and myself have killed monkeys in many parts of the world, but we never yet had an opportunity of witnessing the affecting sight which some describe—the tears, and moans, and touching gestures. We never heard a monkey make any sound whatever when wounded, and as to the gestures and grimaces, they always appeared to us expressive of simple rage and malevolence—feelings quite natural upon the monkey's part, but not

particularly touching. Nevertheless, the experience of many travellers and others is opposed to ours, and I only make this observation to justify our own deeds.

When we had quitted the Grogo branch, and were embarked on the main stream, our progress was more rapid. Towards sundown we reached Buso, one of the stations of the Borneo Company, where we remained for the night under the hospitable care of the tall Chinaman in charge of the post. In the evening, arrived Mr. Helms, the manager of the company, on a visit to the antimony mines of Bidi.

Next morning Arthur and he walked over to the mines, a distance of about nine miles; the road, however, was tolerably good, as the Chinese gold-diggers at Bow were in the habit of using it. For my own part, I decided to accompany our baggage, which was sent round in a light sampan. My foot was too much inflamed to allow me to walk. I settled myself to read under a mat, after warning the boatmen to look out for game. They soon struck up a nasal song, interrupted by many a shrewd criticism and practical joke. The Malays are a very merry people, and in Sarawak they never hesitate to "chaff" their masters a little, as I found out.

The man in the bows, who is an important character in the boat, suddenly called out to me, "Moniet, Tuan!" I jumped up, rifle in hand,

hoping to secure another proboscis monkey, when, looking in the direction indicated by a dozen fingers gravely outstretched, I perceived two Dyaks standing on a bamboo bridge some sixty or eighty feet above our heads. Determined to turn the laugh against my droll servants, I took a steady aim at the figures, which indeed resembled monkeys quite sufficiently to deceive a short-sighted man. My crew got into a great fright, and shouted to me, and to the Dyaks, and to each other, but when I put down my rifle they laughed harder than ever.

In Sarawak the Malay servants are allowed considerable freedom by their masters, who never fear that it will be taken advantage of. In Singapore and the Straits Settlements, where the natives are kept at a much greater distance, the insubordination of the servants is a household misery, but in Sarawak such incidents are very rare.

About two miles above Buso we again quitted the main stream to enter the rocky branch leading to Bidi. A mile above the junction of the two streams, we passed the mouth of a large cavern, from which issued an icy wind. From this peculiarity, which is always noticeable, the cavern derives its name of "Lubong Angin," or Hole of the Wind. We had not the means of exploring its recesses, but the boatmen assured me that it extended a vast distance into the hill. In answer to my call for a volunteer or guide to accompany me as far as the faint light would allow, I was met

with a hesitation which would evidently have turned to a downright refusal had the point been pressed. The steersman, Hassein, who acted as my interpreter in a vague sort of way, assured me that the interior was crammed with devils and dragons. If so, these must be the spirits that "reside in thrilling regions of thick-ribbèd ice," for the strong current of air from the cavern seemed to be considerably below the freezing point. I found that, in case of an accident happening to me in a solitary exploration, I should probably be left to starve inside the cave, and, disliking this prospect, I relinquished the idea.

We arrived off the wharf at Bidi about three o'clock in the afternoon. Some carpenters, busy at a new house upon the river bank, destined for the Company's Agent, assured me that the bungalow where Mr. Helms and my brother were awaiting me was at a distance of two hours' walk over the miners' tramway. I did not know at that time how vague and indefinite were the ideas of Malays and Dyaks about distance, and I grasped my spear with immense determination, anticipating a trying walk in the sun. After wandering for a mile and a-half, however, the road I followed widened into a charming little valley, in the centre of which was the house of the Borneo Company's Agent, and Arthur was sitting with him in the verandah.

I wish I could describe the beauty of that road from the wharf to the mines at Bidi. The tram-

way, so ugly and commonplace in the colourless fields of England, is there carried through the thickest jungle, which rises like a wall on either hand. Bright flowers, rich tints, all shapes of vegetation form a long vista of dreamy beauty. Vast trees, the like of which were never dreamed of in temperate zones, throw a world of green shadow around their trunks; thousands of brilliant butterflies flutter to and fro in the silent heat; all is grand, and lovely, and noiseless. No note of bird or rustle of wing breaks the silence. The burst of childish laughter, which is so much in the beauty of our English summer scenes, is never heard in this verdant desert. The crash of some giant branch yielding to the weight of centuries resounds distantly through the forest, re-echoes widely for the moment, then all is once more hot, and dreamy, and silent.

We were received by the Agent of the Borneo Company stationed at the mines in a manner that did equal credit to his heart and his larder, but we found him in a very bad state of health, and at that moment, in addition to his own sufferings, he had on his hands the assistant sent up from Kuching to relieve him. This latter gentleman was struck down with fever as soon as he arrived, and the day after we reached the mines he was sent back to recruit at Santubong, the sanitarium of Sarawak. Mr. Bentley also was more or less ill all the time of our visit, but strangers were not common with him, and the excitement kept him up.

Though Bidi is horribly unhealthy, it hides its terrors under a lovely aspect, and its scenery was the prettiest we saw in Sarawak. The mines are situated in a small clearing of some fifty acres, surrounded on every side by precipitous mountains covered with verdure. In the midst of the valley are two houses occupied by the Company's agents, and at a little distance are the huts of the Chinese miners, scarcely distinguishable from the grey rocks and boulders with which the ground is covered. Over the mountains around the valley appear the tops of a loftier chain, and a vast grey summit breaks their line of deep blue. This is a mountain fired by the Dyaks some months ago, and still covered with charred jungle.

If the pretty little stream which traverses the valley were not poisoned about every week by Chinese or Dyaks, it would yield a good supply of fish. The native mode of poisoning a river is curious and effective. If the water selected be of any considerable width and volume, a number of sampans are moored across it and filled with "tuba," a narcotic root; water is then poured upon the tuba, which is beaten and pounded with stones. When the water is sufficiently impregnated, the sampan is rocked to and fro till the poisonous liquid is tilted overboard, and the process is re-commenced. The smaller kinds of fish are soon overpowered, and after awhile the larger species come to the surface. Young sharks and alligators

dart uncomfortably about, pursued by the spears of the natives. Should they escape these attacks, however, they soon recover from the effects of the tuba. This root also is used as a protection against sharks in the open sea. The swimmer ties a quantity of fibres round his feet, and no fish will approach him when so defended.

My heel was still too painful to enable me to enter the jungle, but Arthur wandered about and shot various birds and beasts. The only remarkable specimen among the latter was a large squirrel peculiar to Bidi; it had a brown-grey body and a scarlet stripe from nose to tail.

Mr. Bentley talked much of the mountain caves near Bidi, from which the Dyaks obtain edible birds' nests of inferior quality. They are situated about two miles from the mines, and Arthur and he visited them while I was laid up. My brother was so struck there with the numerous "slots" of animals which he could not identify, that on his return he persuaded me to accompany him thither upon a night expedition. Accordingly we started with our Malays on the following afternoon, carrying with us all necessaries for a night's bivouac in the jungle.

The route led us by "batang" paths such as I have described before, as far as the banks of a stream up which it was necessary to wade for a mile and a half. This was the only practicable way to our destination, and we had provided dry clothes

accordingly. On reaching the caves we found them to be vast halls excavated by the hand of Nature under an overhanging cliff about 150 feet high. We walked along the foot of this precipice, which was covered with ferns and shrubs, for a distance of half a mile, without finding it diminish materially in height. The caverns are generally of no great depth or altitude, but of vast length, and finely hung with stalactites. At intervals huge natural pillars support the roof, or, placed closer together, seem to divide the hall into various chambers. In several of them was a smaller passage directly entering the mountain. We followed one of these, pointed out to us as the most practicable, over mud and rocks for a quarter of a mile, but we did not emerge on the top of the cliff as we had been led to expect. On the contrary, the passage terminated abruptly in a labyrinth of mud and stones and water, but it is probable we mistook the entrance. On a rocky slab at the mouth of this cavern was a strange little clay figure bearing some resemblance to a human being. It was possibly an idol, but if so, that was the only specimen of such a thing we saw in the country with one exception.

In these interior passages are discovered the edible birds' nests. The labour and the danger of procuring them are great, and, when obtained, the plunder is not very valuable. The foundation of isinglass is the same as in the more esteemed

species, but the nests of Bidi are yellow and dirty. The bird itself we did not see, as it is migratory, but we understood that it closely resembles the more delicate species. We were also told that the supply of nests is almost exhausted, and the Dyaks scarcely now consider it worth their while to search for them.

On our arrival at the caves, we immediately lighted a great fire in one of the interior caverns, about fifty yards from its mouth. We then sent away the Malays, spread our rugs, and prepared for a night watch in one of the largest halls, the floor of which was kneaded with the slots of undistinguishable animals. Our Malays had carried off the lantern, and there was no moon, but from the position we occupied, any considerable object passing through the clearing could be seen with tolerable distinctness. Suddenly, however, a new and horrible thought dashed through my brain. "By Jove! If we fire a rifle inside here, we shall be crushed by the fall of these huge stalactites!" The idea was unpleasant but incontrovertible, so we carried our rugs into the open air outside, thrust our spears into the ground, laid guns and knives handy, drank a glass of brandy, rolled ourselves up, leant our backs against the spears, and watched in silence. Suddenly, a buck belled within fifty yards of us, and another answered from a little distance. We were instantly on the alert, but unless he strolled into the glade, he was safe enough. The

night was pitchy dark, and the deer was down by the stream; before we could have penetrated a yard of the jungle between us, he would have been far away, and we should have been lost in the woods.

For nearly an hour this indefatigable buck kept us excited, sometimes nearer, sometimes more distant, but sending forth his clear bell-like challenge each instant, and waiting for the musical answer from the other bank. Perhaps few people in England know the melody of a wild buck's bell in a quiet night; it can be compared to nothing except a long low stroke upon an exquisitely toned gong.

After watching for about two hours, during which he never wandered ten yards from the stream, we decided that the conduct of this deer was, to say the least of it, inconsiderate, and unworthy of further attention. It was growing cold, too, and the night was much darker than we could reasonably have anticipated. Accordingly we resolved to return to our bonfire inside the cavern, and with a laugh at the drollery of the situation, commenced to unroll our warm rugs, and to grope for our belongings. But Fate had decided that we should arouse the echoes of Bidi that night. Just as we plucked up our spears, a sound of dull grunting, mingled with the faint crackling of sticks, reached our ears. "Pigs, by Jove!" we whispered, and were prepared in a moment.

The noise came nearer, and presently little treble squeaks mingled with the first bass voice. "A sow and litter," muttered Arthur; "look out!" And we did look out, but nothing could we possibly see. There was a vast pillar of white stone about twenty feet from where we lay, which separated two chambers of the cavern. Its light colour caused it to stand out faintly in the dense darkness. Suddenly Arthur threw up his rifle and fired in that direction. On the instant, a great scuffle ensued with much squeaking and grunting, crackle of underwood, and rustle of leaves. I drew my bow—that is, my trigger—at a venture, somewhere in the direction of the sound, and when the thundering echo from the cliff had died away, there was a deep silence.

We felt tolerably confident that nothing was hit, though Arthur had fancied he saw something black cross the white patch. No animal was likely to approach for hours after the hideous clamour our shots had raised, so we decided to turn in at once. Besides, we were sleepy.

Under these circumstances it became necessary to strike a light. Matches there were none, of course, but our despair may be conceived when we found our tinder-cord to be damp with dew. Wonderful were the schemes chemical, mechanical, and philosophic, which we devised to obtain a spark. We blew ourselves up with gunpowder, drenched our clothes with brandy, and burnt our hands; certainly, after the experience of that night, every

lucifer match we strike should be accompanied by a thanksgiving. At length, when we were at the end alike of our wits and our gunpowder, some dry leaves took fire and grew into a flame. We lighted a candle, we lighted two, for fear one should go out, and entered the cavern. Our great fire was extinguished from want of air,—after splitting a rock from top to bottom with its heat,—so we spread our rugs in the outer hall, lighted a pipe, and turned in.

When the candle had burnt out commenced a series of strange and unaccountable noises, only to be conceived by one who has slept in a haunted house. Such rustling, and squealing, and scuffling are rarely heard in canny lodgings. Nevertheless, we passed the night very comfortably. No doubt there were legions of snakes and scorpions—huge tiger-cats—bloodthirsty vampires—centipedes venomous as upas—gambolling all around, maybe crawling over us, but we did not see any, so we cannot say. The only point we could vouch for was the noise, which was extraordinary and rather startling, but we awoke in the morning not a whit the worse for our adventure.

When the Malays returned in the dawn, they regarded our appearance with considerable interest. We reached Bidi by breakfast-time, greatly to the delight of our kind host. He was much altered since the previous day by a sharp recurrence of fever, which rendered him quite unable to perform

his duties. The time until his recovery was occupied by us in wandering about the little valley, of which the principal productions are antimony, snakes, and butterflies. A brisk exporting trade in scorpions would contribute much to the comfort of the inhabitants, and Bidi would willingly supply the world with centipedes and sand-flies. But its butterflies are the glory of the place. The species are innumerable, and, excepting some of the commonest sorts, one rarely meets with two of the same kind in a walk. This astonishing profusion is the more remarkable, as the country in general is singularly destitute of them, and they are not plentiful even in Kuching. In size and colour many of the species are superb, and their eccentricities of shape are very puzzling to one investigating the use or object of such variety.

In the beauty and abundance of its snakes Bidi also bears the palm. It is no unusual thing in walking from Mr. Bentley's bungalow to the mines, a distance of 150 yards, to see three or four glide across the tramway. Many of the species are very graceful and brilliant, but most of them are venomous. The efficacy of spirits, however, when taken in time and in a sufficient quantity to avert evil consequences from the bite of a snake, has been repeatedly proved in Sarawak. Even the deadly poison of the "upas," with which the Kyans and Kennowits tip the arrows of their "sumpits,"* yields readily to this

* The "sumpit" or "sumpitan" is the native name of the

simple remedy. But it is extraordinary that, in spite of the abundance of serpents in Borneo, no white has hitherto been bitten by them.

For its flowers Bidi is deservedly famous; from thence have been obtained some of our finest orchids and delitra. The celebrated blue orchid was discovered accidentally by Mr. Bentley upon the bough of a tree which he had passed a hundred times. As he described it to us, the blossoms hung in an azure garland from the branch, more gracefully than art could design. The specimen then discovered is, I believe, the only one at present known, and both Malays and Dyaks are quite ignorant of such a flower, though they begin to be aware of the present mania for orchids in England, and to distinguish the rarer species.

Three days after our visit to the caves, Mr. Bentley was sufficiently recovered to guide us to a village of Land Dyaks, called Krokong, situated about four hours' walk from Bidi. The "batang" path thither was very dilapidated, over a rugged country intersected by numerous ravines. About half a mile from our destination the road reached the river bank, and was carried across the stream in a very ingenious manner. A bridge of bamboos was thrown from one side to the other, and hung about sixty feet above the water. A single bamboo, eight or

blowpipe carried by the tribes of the interior. It is also used sometimes by the Sea Dyaks, and I shall have occasion to describe it in speaking of these people.

nine inches in diameter, affords quite sufficient support to a Dyak, whatever may be the depth of the abyss beneath. A slight hand-rail is placed on either side to assist the balance, but, in case of the traveller slipping, he carries bridge, hand-rail, and all together down on to the rocks beneath—a catastrophe which occasionally happens to the best of these structures. To suspend the bridge, a tree is selected on either bank whose branches conveniently overhang the water; long bamboos and ratans are attached to the boughs, sustaining the structure as well as is possible; but towards the middle it becomes very insecure. In this case the bridge was about eighty yards long, but the half of it was supported upon tressels on either bank. The part actually suspended may have been sixty or eighty feet long. Certainly, when we had crossed in safety, and could survey its arrangement from the opposite bank, it appeared a very strange and ingenious piece of architecture; but in passing over, the bamboos shook and swayed in a manner far too alarming for us to give any thought to the picturesque. This was the same bridge upon which the Dyaks stood whom our boatmen pointed out to me as monkeys, in ascending the river.

Shortly after crossing the bridge, we came to a spot where the track to the paddy fields of the village in use this season* diverged from the main

* The Dyaks allow their rice grounds to lie fallow for several years, during which time they become covered with impene-

road. Here were erected twelve large posts with their tops sliced off diagonally, as we were told by the Malays, to keep the devils from destroying the newly-sown rice. The Europeans of Sarawak were not aware of any such custom.

It is exceedingly difficult to judge of distance in traversing the batang paths. Although we were about four hours walking as rapidly as was possible, perhaps the actual distance from the mines to Krokong would not be more than four or five miles. Practice does not at first give the European greater confidence in crossing the ravines; we were more subject to giddiness and inconvenience on this march than upon our first experiment from Grogo to Nawang. It is true the road was more dangerous and in worse repair.

On arriving at Krokong, we found it to be a long straggling village, in which most of the inhabitants lived in one house about eighty yards in length. It was not built, however, with the regularity and neatness characteristic of Sea-Dyak architecture, and the different parts of the building were upon unequal levels. There were also several detached habitations. We did not observe much worthy of remark among the people; they seemed to be a shade more comfortable than the inhabitants of Grogo.

Half way down the hill upon which the village

trable jungle, which has to be cleared away by burning as the turn of the field comes round.

stood, was a "pangaran" house in decaying condition. In it were hung nine human heads, among which we noticed an immense specimen belonging formerly, as we were told, to a Dyak from Serike. If the remainder of this man's body was in due proportion to his skull, he must have been considerably over six feet—a gigantic stature, indeed, among this stunted people. The manner of this poor fellow's death was sufficiently obvious: a sword cut had sliced off the entire side of his skull. Two other heads belonged to Chinese rebels, killed by the "Orang Kaya" himself. The "pangaran" house had formerly been circular, or perhaps octagonal in shape, neatly constructed, and adorned with rude pictures and rather indecorous carvings; but half of it was now on the ground, and the floor had rotted away. In former times all the bachelors of a Dyak clan were compelled to sleep in these houses, and were thus kept out of mischief; another advantage was, that in case of a sudden attack the natural defenders of the village were enabled to meet the enemy in a body and were not liable to be cut off in detail. Here, also, councils were held and head-trophies were hung.

In these peaceful times, however, the young men have protested vigorously against the restriction upon their liberty, and the "pangaran" houses are everywhere falling to decay.

The Sow Dyaks who inhabit Krokung have a custom of tabooing their houses to the male sex

during the confinement of their women, and for seven days afterwards. In ignorance of this superstition, we brought unheard-of calamities upon a household in the village. The presence of a crowd before one of the doors excited our curiosity, and we forced our way in, hoping to see something of interest. No one attempted to lay hands on us, and we were unable to comprehend the loudest shouting; the gods were opposed to this family's welfare, and sent us to ensure their ruin. Should their paddy fields thrive, however, and their children grow up healthily, this accidental intrusion of ours may strike hard upon the superstition.

We slept upon a board in the Orang Kaya's apartment, and many times during the night we sincerely wished that the use of the plane had been introduced among the Dyaks. Next morning after a long swim in the river, we started for Bidi by boat, accompanied by the Orang Kaya. The latter was a tall old man with quiet, steady eyes, and cheek bones of incredible dimensions. His son, a handsome boy of ten or twelve, also joined our party. He was suffering from two severe cuts on the shin caused by the "parang ilang," in the use of which weapon the Land Dyaks are not expert.

The "parang ilang," though much used by the Sea Dyaks, is the national weapon of the Kyans, a powerful inland tribe who are the principal iron workers of the island. The blade is convex upon one side, concave on the other, and there is also a pecu-

liar twist in its back. In cutting, the concave side should be next the object aimed at, as, in the reverse case, the weapon is apt to fly back upon the striker, as happened to this boy. In consequence of this peculiarity, two modes of cutting only are possible with the parang, one downwards from right to left, the other upwards from left to right. But to accommodate left-handed warriors, some parangs are forged on exactly the opposite principle, and can only be used in the left hand. The hilt is always of bone, deeply carved, and ornamented with dyed human hair. The sheath is wooden, adorned towards the upper part with knobs and carvings of bone or metal; halfway down its side is set a piece of panther skin, and knots and scalps of human hair dyed scarlet. Attached to one side of the sheath is a small knife with a long straight handle, and a native always endeavours to remove this before selling his weapon. The "parang ilang" is a terrible weapon in practised hands, and some of Sir James Brooke's officers carry it in preference to a sword; wielded by a novice, however, it is almost as dangerous to himself as to the enemy. The finest parangs—or those esteemed so—are found in the graves of Kyan warriors, which are consequently rifled by Dyaks and Malays on every possible occasion. I have one, purchased at Kennowit, which, I was told, had been obtained from a sepulchre three hundred years old, a rather improbable assertion, though I believe

the weapon was really found in a Kyan grave, for it was strangely stained and rusted when I bought it.

In front of Mr. Bentley's bungalow at Bidi was a gigantic tree belonging to the species called by the natives "Tapong." What the exact height of this one might be I cannot say, but many of them rise 130 to 150 feet without a branch. At the top of the one of which I speak, a bees' nest was ascertained to exist, and this the Dyaks instantly determined to rifle. To discover it at all at such a height showed a marvellous power of vision, but to reach it by any means at their disposal seemed to require the aid of witches or "antus" or some other of the powers of darkness. Without calling upon any of these, however, the Dyaks composedly began their preparations.

They first planted a strong pole about two feet from the trunk. A hole was then bored in the wood and a stout stick thrust in, and fastened at the other end to the pole. Thus the rung of a ladder was created, of which the tree was one side or support, and the pole the other. The process was repeated until they had reached the top of the pole, when they attached another to it, end to end, gained the height of the second by more rungs, and so continued their work till the dangerous ladder attained the height of the bees' nest, which was certainly ninety or one hundred feet from the ground. Up this structure they then carefully

climbed, without any apparent giddiness or timidity; it shook and swayed with their weight, the ratans which held it together crackled, and the poles creaked, but the adventurous Dyaks seemed not a bit nervous. In taking the nest one of them was badly stung, but all descended without accident.

Another interesting phenomenon these natives showed us which, though no doubt easily explained upon scientific principles, appeared very remarkable. As we sat in the verandah my cheroot went out, and I asked one of the Dyaks squatted at our side to give me a light. He took from his siri* box of bamboo, a piece of pitcher, and a little tinder; put the latter upon the pitcher and held it under his thumb, struck sharply against the bamboo, and instantly offered me the tinder alight. Several times subsequently we watched them obtain fire by this means, but failed to make out a reasonable theory for the result.

Among some of the Dyak tribes there is a manner of striking fire much more extraordinary. The instrument used is a slender cube of lead which fits tightly in a case of bamboo. The top of the cube is hollowed into a cup, and when fire is required this cup is filled with tinder, the leaden

* Siri is a species of pepper. A piece of the nut borne by the Areca palm—called "penang" by the Malays and Dyaks—is wrapped up in the broad leaf of the "siri," with a little tobacco, gambier, and lime; and the whole is put into the mouth. From the importance of "penang" and "siri" in the preparation, it is called by one or other name indifferently

piston is held upright in the left hand, the bamboo case is thrust sharply down over it, as quickly withdrawn, and the tinder is found to be alight. The natives say that no metal but lead will produce the effect. I must observe that we never saw this singular method in use, though the officers of the *Rajah* seemed acquainted with it.

The mode of obtaining fire by means of two sticks, generally in use among barbarians, is also practised in Borneo. The result is not attained, however, by rubbing them together, as is generally believed in England,—an exercise of which a man would probably get very tired before he obtained a spark,—but a rude cross is notched in any piece of light dry stick, and the point of another piece of some harder species is spun round therein as rapidly as it can be rolled between the hands. Nevertheless it requires some practice to obtain a light by this means, as most travellers can attest by aching experience.

Two days after our return from Krokong, we took to our boat again, bearing with us a recollection of kindness and hospitality from the officers of the Borneo Company which was confirmed by all our after experience. Just as we started from the wharf we were gratified to hear that a new and apparently extensive vein of antimony had been discovered upon the other side the river. The mine at Bidi was almost exhausted when we saw it, and before our arrival Mr. Bentley had been "prospecting" for

a fresh lode. All operations of any extent, and more especially mining, suffer in this country from the difficulty of obtaining labour. Malays will not work upon land, proudly calling themselves "orang laüt," men of the sea; Dyaks never dream of engaging themselves for any duties whatever except hunting, and the Chinese, though most admirable workmen, are exposed at Bidi to much temptation by the proximity of the Bow gold-washings, which frequently entice them to break their engagements and speculate in digging. That the extensive works of the Borneo Company should be carried on with the success they now attain requires unceasing care and watchfulness on the part of all the agents, but it is hoped and expected in Sarawak that the recent British recognition, and the establishment of a consulate at Kuching, will cause a great immigration of Chinese coolies, and that, possibly, Sir James Brooke may eventually obtain that convict labour which he has repeatedly solicited from Singapore and elsewhere.

As we dropped down the river we stayed a few moments at Bow to purchase a paddle, and while we waited, two women came down from the houses to fetch water. As is usual in Chinese households they combined one business with another, bringing with them, in addition to their water-vessels, rude cradles for gold-washing. When the jars were filled, they scraped up a mass of mud from the bottom of the river, and commenced twirling their cradles

in the usual manner. The labour of one was quite fruitless, but the other had better fortune. The latter was a fine, handsome woman, a half-bred Malay and Chinese; she displayed a magnificent row of jetty teeth when we asked to see her cradle, and waded to us instantly. At the bottom was a little heap of gold dust, as much as would cover a threepenny bit. Our boatmen told us that such success was exceptional, though even a greater quantity is occasionally obtained from one washing.

The annual amount of bullion obtained at Bow is quite uncertain. We heard numerous accounts of Chinese diggers who have remitted fortunes to their friends in the "Flowery Land," and such an event may possibly have occurred in one or two exceptional instances, but the insurmountable objection remains, that the Malays do not think the profit of washing worth its labour and discomfort. Gold-digging, whether at Bow or Ballarat, is the natural occupation of the gambler, and when a Malay gets cleaned out at the tables, he frequently endeavours to recruit in this manner; but the average profits of gold-washing will scarcely reach the eighteen cents which form the usual daily wage in Sarawak. Nevertheless, as every flood brings with it a supply of the precious metal, it must evidently exist in greater quantity in the high grounds through which the head-waters of the river Sarawak make their way, and in future years Christendom may rush to the streams and mountains of Borneo

as it lately did to those of California, Australia, and Vancouver's Island.

But the manners and customs of the floating Chinese population at Bow are more interesting than their labours. Marriage is regarded by them with a cynical indifference beyond the dreams of Lycurgus himself, and, whether it be that Pope was right about the female heart, or whether the wives are in too great dread of their husbands to rebel, certain it is that not one of the victims was ever heard to lament her fate. The women are all Malay or Dyak, or half-breed, and as they were originally sold to their first husband, it may be that they think less of being resold by the purchaser.

But if jealousy is thus systematically discouraged in a Chinese household, the wife's position is in other respects most comfortable. The duty of the husband is not confined among them to his outdoor occupations, but it is his pride and pleasure to remove all labour from his wife's province—to sweep the hut, light the fire, and thresh the paddy. The duty of a Chinaman's wife is to sit still and look pretty. Such is a theory of woman's rights and duties worked out by the experience of four thousand years' civilization. Though women are not badly treated either by Malays or Dyaks, still their occupations with them are much more arduous —in their own eyes—than simply sitting still and looking nice, and marriage with a Chinaman is joyfully accepted in spite of its peculiar characteristics.

We picked up our luggage left at Buso, and about nine o'clock at night reached Government-house, at Kuching, where we found a numerous party assembled. H.M.S.S. *Rifleman* had arrived from Singapore to convey Sir James Brooke the first stage of his journey to England. Awaiting our arrival was a most kind note from the Rajah, written in case he should have sailed before our return, inviting us to accompany some of his officers on an expedition to Kennowit to witness the ceremonies of peace ratified between his government and the Kyan nation, a war with whom had just been victoriously concluded.

In four days more we started in the *Jolly Bachelor* gun-boat, while the Tuan Mudah, Mr. J. B. Cruickshank, Resident of Kennowit, and Mr. Stuart Johnson, sub-Resident of Seribas, preceded us in the *Venus*.

CHAPTER IV.

The *Jolly Bachelor*—Accident—People of Kennowit—Tatooing—*Enlargement of the Ear*—Rejang River—Deputation of Women—*Invitation to a Kennowit Festivity*—Narrow Escape—*Dance of Warriors*—"Joke"—"Mias" Dance—Deer Dance—Pantomimic Dance—Head-Hunting Dance—Female Performance.

THE *Jolly Bachelor* is the smaller of Sir James Brooke's gun-boats, and is commanded by Capt. Micheson. Her burthen is about forty tons, and her origin is lost in the distance of an antique age. Sarawak deprived of the *Jolly* would be like America without the memory of Washington—her history would die with its founder. In former times the *Jolly* was celebrated for the incredible number of scorpions and centipedes* which infested her timbers; since her last resurrection these plagues have disappeared, and the *Jolly* has no longer a claim to personal glory, save in the events which she has seen and participated.

* It has been frequently proved in the far East that the most venomous reptiles lose all power of injury after a few days at sea. The sailors of the *Jolly*, well aware of this, were not in the least alarmed at the swarms of scorpions issuing from the hold, and the malignant reptiles themselves knew their own impotence, and did not attempt to use their fearful powers of mischief.

She is not a fast boat, nor can she be called comfortable; the voyager is never quite satisfied, as he reflects upon her hard service and astounding longevity, that she may not come to a sudden end like the "deacon's chaise," and cast him forth upon the deep. Nor has she that steadiness and sobriety of movement which should accompany virtuous old age, but certainly she has some of its other comforts—love, and honour, and troops of friends. No one has been to Sarawak but knows the *Jolly*, and can remember many a pleasant hour passed in her low cabin, as she lay becalmed in some silent creek or river, where the thick jungle was all around, the water rotting among the mangroves beneath, and the deep blue sky overhead.

But running up the N.W. coast at the change of the monsoons was not quite so pleasant as the dreamy river travel. The weather was very bad, as was to be expected at the season, and we had several accidents. One night, as we dashed up the Rejang river in a terrible squall of wind and rain, I stood in the companion looking for a break in the shroud-like sky. Suddenly I heard a wild cry overhead, and at the same moment a dark mass shot down before my face, and dashed with fearful violence against the side. We hastened to raise the horrid-looking heap from the sloppy deck, and found it to be the body of an unfortunate sailor who had fallen from aloft. His thigh was broken, and his head badly cut and bruised. In the morning we dis-

covered that his skull had drilled a round hole in the bottom of the sampan which was hauled up alongside. Had it not been for this, however, the poor fellow must have gone overboard, and the tide was running out very fast. Even if he had escaped the sharks, the chances were much against his making shore in such a night and such a sea.

When daylight came, we endeavoured to set the broken thigh; but the anatomical difficulties which we found seemed insurmountable, and we satisfied ourselves with binding it up in bamboo splints, and putting the man ashore at a village where he said he had friends.

A few days after this event—passed in an equal proportion of sharp squalls and merry calms, blazing days and soft starlit nights, when we used to sit out on deck singing nigger songs, and trying to talk sentiment about the Southern Cross, which glimmered down on the horizon—we reached Kennowit. This town, situated about 150 miles up the Rejang river, is inhabited principally by a tribe of the same name, formerly very powerful in this part of the island, but now rapidly diminishing in numbers and importance. The Kennowits, indeed, complain that they are in danger of extinction from the Dyak clans surrounding them, and that the latter leave them no ground on which to plant their rice. They have never been well-disposed towards the Rajah's government, and engaged heartily in the conspiracy of 1859 against it, signalising themselves therein

by the murder of their Residents, Messrs. Fox and Steele, as these gentlemen were strolling unarmed outside the fort.

In appearance the Kennowits contrast badly even with the Land Dyaks, and are far inferior to the sea tribes. I have already observed that they belong to one of the five aboriginal races, but in language and characteristics they are so closely allied to the Kyans as almost to be merged in that powerful tribe.

The Kennowits have the Tartar cast of face and figure which characterises more or less every race in the island, and is especially noticeable among the Malays. Their colour is yellow, their eyeballs small and prominent, the ridge of the nose between the eyes is almost imperceptible, the mouth is large and shapeless, the cheek-bones project enormously, the nostrils are wide and flat, and the expression generally sullen and malignant. The above description may be held to refer also to the Kyans, with whom the Kennowits are closely connected; but the Dyaks, though perhaps of the same original stock, are much more agreeable in feature and expression. But it is principally in point of language that the five races show such marked dissimilarity.

The Kennowits, and their kindred the Kyans, tatoo the chest in pale blue lines with an occasional streak of scarlet. Many of the arabesques are very intricate and beautiful, but I never saw them attempt to delineate the figure of any animal.

Sometimes they give themselves beard and whiskers in blue tracery; naturally their faces are quite smooth, as is the case with all the natives of the far East.* Both Malays and Dyaks consider tatooing to be a sign of cowardice, for, say they, a brave man requires no adventitious aid to make him terrible, and in fact the Kennowits are not highly esteemed for courage.

Another of their customs is the enlargement of the lobe of the ear to an enormous size: I have seen cases where an orange could be passed through the orifice with the greatest ease.

The costume of the men is precisely the same as that I have described as prevailing among the Land Dyaks, and their habits are similar. The women wear the bedang or short petticoat, but when working in the sun they put on a quilted jacket, open down the front. On great occasions, such as a deputation to their Resident, they come out in full Malay costume.

The Rejang river upon which the town of Kennowit stands, is the largest stream in the island; it is more than half a mile wide opposite the town, which is situated about three hundred miles from the sea.

* Hair upon the face is not unknown either among Malays or Dyaks, though it is rare. I remember a chief of the Undups, and a handsome young fellow from the Upper Sakarran, both of whom had whiskers; and Subu, the executioner of Kuching, has a goodly white beard. The Malays sometimes manage to grow half-a dozen long wiry hairs upon the upper lip, of which they are very proud,

The fort stands on a hill overlooking the water, and, like all the other out-stations of Sarawak, is a wooden building of two stories. The lower part has no windows, and the only entrance is by a ladder to the first floor. It is well provided with cannon, and there is a plentiful supply of firearms upon the racks; mostly, however, smooth bores and very ancient.

The morning after our arrival, as I looked through the lattice-work under the eaves of the fort, I beheld a most astonishing phenomenon. Immediately below me was a round circle of straw nearly five feet in diameter—beyond that another, and a dozen more beyond that, in due diminution of perspective. The objects were in motion winding along the path in a horribly business-like manner. I remained speechless for a while, but when the first had passed on some little distance, beneath the extraordinary straw covering I perceived the body and long black hair of a woman. Another and another was disclosed, and the mystery was solved; the wives of the Kennowits were coming to pay their respects to Mr. Cruickshank, their Resident, on his safe return. The wonderful structures which so overwhelmed me when seen from above, were neither more nor less than their hats, and indeed they could not well have been more, though easily less.

Most of the women were of astonishing age and amusing ugliness. One little girl, however, who

was certainly not more than four feet high, though full-grown and married, seemed rather good-looking.

These charming beings squatted down in a semi-circle in Mr. Cruickshank's bedroom, and instantly began to express their sentiments with a freedom and decision which told well for their household independence. They showed, or at least professed, their contempt for the presents offered them without the slightest hesitation. The deputation was dressed in long Malay jackets of blue cotton, very tight, very shiny, and provided with a considerable number of gold or gilt buttons. For this festive occasion only they wore Malay sarongs about their waists, falling down to the ankles; their whole appearance indeed far more resembled that of Malays than of Dyaks.

The worthy ladies were treated with scant ceremony according to European ideas. Mr. Cruickshank went in and out of the room all the time, had a game at play with his big monkey, and finally left the women entirely alone while he went on board the *Venus*, which was lying in the middle of the river. But the deputation thought nothing of it apparently; they squatted on their haunches in perfect contentment whether their Resident was present or not, and harangued us with great cheerfulness when he had finally disappeared. We could not understand a word they said, nor for that matter could anybody else except Mr. Cruickshank, who has necessarily studied their language.

In the afternoon our party was invited by a famous Kennowit warrior named Joke—a faithful friend to the Rajah's government—to be present at a great festivity to be held at the house of the Orang Kaya, in honour of the Tuan Mudah's arrival. After dinner accordingly we embarked upon the moonlit river in a sampan or native boat. But the sampan was very small, and our party rather large, from which two causes it resulted that, long before we reached our destination, everyone became uneasy. We first put all the heavy men in the middle, then we divided them: then we devised another mode of balancing the craft, in the midst of which she began to sink and we made a desperate rush for the bank, to which we were fortunately close. The sampan went down just as the last of us jumped out. I may mention, in passing, that the Rejang is celebrated, even among the rivers of Borneo, for the peculiar malevolence of its sharks and alligators.

When we landed the moon had disappeared behind a bank of clouds, and the darkness was almost visible. The houses were at some distance from the spot where we were; there was no path, or in their excitement our guides had missed it, and we were obliged to make our way through the underwood as best we could. For my own part I will here make a confession. The reason that I reached the Orang Kaya's house in such coolness and comfort was that I performed the journey upon

the back of a stalwart little Malay fortman, who whispered the proposition into my ear as we landed. I took care, however, to preserve my dignity by alighting just before reaching the door.

We found the Orang Kaya's house to be raised quite twenty feet from the ground, though it was not the tallest in the town. To gain this elevation the visitor is obliged to climb up a notched log provided with a slight handrail to assist the balance. When we had mounted, we found ourselves in a sort of verandah, upon which opened the door of a large irregular chamber crammed with natives. The ceremony of hand-shaking is thought much of by them, and every warrior was anxious to go through it with us. When they were all satisfied, we were conducted to one end of the apartment, and there sat down with our backs to the wall. In case of accidents, our party was very strong, consisting of six Europeans well armed, and twelve Malays in the Rajah's uniform, tight blue jacket, red sash, and white trousers. And this enumeration does not include 'Din, the Tuan Mudah's pretty little Malay boy, whom I saw in a prominent position, girt with a sabre so long that he must have drawn it over his shoulder after the manner of the crusaders.

After waiting some time in considerable impatience, a board was laid down in front of us, upon which dancing was to take place. The next moment a warrior leapt upon it with that correct spring we have seen so often on a more luxurious

stage. The music opened up, the performer began to dance, and the scene became striking enough.

The immense apartment was full of queer corners and recesses, so crammed with spectators as barely to leave a space clear for the dancing. Such light as there was came from a number of tall bronze braziers, of design and workmanship by no means contemptible, which were filled with some odoriferous wood. Being principally disposed near ourselves, and emitting a dense smoke and a dazzling red flame, they enabled us only to catch an occasional glimpse of a multitude of dun figures squatted on the ground, whose bright eyes gleamed with excitement in the obscurity. Round the semicircular space behind us and on our flanks were ranged cloths and sarongs of brilliant colour, while on the board in the centre danced the warrior in naked dignity. On our right were the Malays, whose savage features and tasteful costumes seemed to make the background still more striking and barbarous.

So far as we could ascertain, there was no particular significance in the first dance. It was very slow and solemn, with much swaying from side to side, and stooping, and turning about, all, however, in excellent time to the music. After a while another warrior joined the first, and both crouched down on their haunches in the usual Dyak fighting position, and went through figures apparently as much *de rigueur* as those of a European quadrille.

Both were completely armed with sword and shield, and the strength and agility displayed were rather striking, but otherwise the performance appeared to "drag."

When these two had perspired till they seemed likely to melt away entirely, our friend Joke, who had been looking on with manifest impatience, suddenly sprang up and took his place on the board.

Joke was a little man,—probably not over five feet two inches in height,—but with a breadth of shoulder and depth of chest which would not have disgraced a life-guardsman. There was not an ounce of flesh to spare on his yellow-brown body, which glistened with health and condition, and his broad chest was covered all over with graceful blue arabesques. The huge lobes of his ears hung on his shoulders, and through each two broad brass rings were passed, three inches in diameter and half an inch thick. He prepared for his part by putting on a war-cloak of wild bull's hide, adorned with feathers of the rhinoceros hornbill, and trimmed with red cloth and panther-skin. More feathers of the same bird fluttered about his war cap of monkey-fur and fell into his little prominent eyes, which glistened with gin and excitement. He was about to show us a dance, designed to represent the principal events in the life of an orang-outang or mias, and it must be evident to all thinking individuals that sword, and shield, and

war cap are essentially requisite for the correct delineation of that animal's habits.

The contortions through which Joke put his person and his features are beyond description; suffice it to say that, by the aid of much nature and a little art, he managed to give himself something of the personal appearance of an orang-outang. But if his imitation of the animal's postures and general habits were at all true to nature, I can only say that in Europe we have much to learn on this subject. The performance was brought to rather an abrupt conclusion, and the mias was left in a peculiarly uncomfortable posture, with its cap over its eyes. Then Joke volunteered to give us a deer-dance in like manner. This also was entirely opposed to the ideas usually current as to this animal's habits, and might have led an inexperienced traveller to conclude that a deer in Borneo was engaged through its whole existence in beating time to music on its hind legs, with a drawn sword in its fore-paw.

Joke deserted his deer in a very sudden manner, just as the animal was apparently about to volunteer a song. A glass of neat gin restored him to his pristine vigour, and, in company with another chief, he gave us one of the traditional dances of the Kennowits. Arranged in all the bravery which delights the military mind in most quarters of the globe, these two chiefs made a great fight in the heroic style,—musical time, stamping of feet, and turning of backs. The slow activity, if I may so express

myself, which they showed in leaping from side to side in the constrained position in which Dyaks fight, seemed very remarkable. After a while Joke, who always contrived to be the hero of the scene, finding himself evenly matched, commenced, in pantomime, to make spikes under cover of his shield, which was adorned with figures in blue and red paint, and with streaming locks of human hair. The spikes consisted of bamboo stakes, sharpened and thrown about the ground; a most dangerous weapon against a bare-footed enemy, for the green bamboo is as hard as a steel blade, as I know by painful experience. In the end Joke was successful; and his foe, lame and helpless, was dispatched after a courageous *pas seul* upon one leg.

Then ensued a wild fandango of triumph round the body, while the drums and gongs composing our orchestra beat like mad things. Presently, amid the yells of the audience, Joke tore off his enemy's head—that is, his cap—and danced about with it. On more attentive examination, the miserable man recognised the features of his brother, and howled. After simulating grief and horror, much as it is done at the Italian Opera, he adopted a bold resolution, seized his brother's shoulders, spat furiously into the cap, and thrust it upon the dead man's head. Upon which the brother leapt to his feet, and the two executed a "pas de congratulation." This was the hit of the evening, and the yells were awful.

After resting awhile, and drinking much more raw spirit than was good for him, our indefatigable friend leapt again upon the stage, like a giant renovated with gin.

This time he gave us a piece of pantomime representing a Kennowit jungle campaign. It was admirable both in design and execution, comprising the various incidents of an unsuccessful expedition in search of heads, such as ten years ago occupied half the existence of these fellows;—the other half being passed in successful excursions. It behoved the performer to do his best, for the audience were critical upon the representation of events which, passing away from the domain of the "chic" and the romantic, came within the experience of every one of them, and Joke, who was a brave and renowned warrior, simply drew upon his memory for the "points" of the performance.

He began with a spirited strut along his board, representing a proud departure from home with his companions. Then he crept stealthily along in an enemy's country. The surprise followed, a general fight, and the death of all his comrades. Then he wandered about, lost in a hostile jungle, afraid to light a fire, and starving. Finally, with a last faint stamp in time to the music, he lay down to die, but rousing himself for a final effort, crawled home and celebrated his escape with a lively jig. The whole pantomime was exceedingly clever, and required scarcely a word of explanation. Joke is

celebrated for this dance, and for the one with his brother which I have described, and when taken to Kuching by Mr. Cruickshank, he is much supplicated for a performance, but it is generally to no purpose.

The dancing, with the intervals between, had now lasted about three hours, and the atmosphere of the hut was curious. Also every one of the warriors was drunk, or in a fair way to become so, and the dignity of the Government officers began to warn them to move. Three aged and hideous hags, arrayed in long blue coats of silk with Malay "sarongs," and gold ornaments, attempted to get up a female exhibition, accompanied by much waving of arms and shaking of stomachs, but somehow they could not at all agree about the right mode of commencing, and we would not wait for the end of the very voluble argument in which they instantly engaged.

So about midnight we sallied out from the smoky gin-sodden atmosphere of the hut, and returned in safety on board the *Venus*. As we sat on deck smoking a last cheroot and watching the ripple of the moonlight on the swift river, the yells of the Kennowits came faintly to our ears, showing that the excitement of the festival had by no means abated after our departure.

CHAPTER V.

The *Venus*—Colony of Sakarran Dyaks—War-Boat of the Kennowits—Fine Race of People—Valuable Jars—Comparison of Kennowits and Dyaks—Dyak Ear-rings—An Albino—Dyak Anxiety for Heads—Pakatans—Intended Removal of Kennowit—Bruni Currency—Attack on the Kyan Ambassadors—Scenery on the Egan—Bintulu—European Civilization in the East—Malay Love-Story—Dyak Hunting—Curious Law-case — Rich Costumes — "Kris"—Executions — "Parang Latok"—Sabres—Dout's Prowess.

THE *Venus* is a much larger vessel than the *Jolly Bachelor*, and her accommodation is very comfortable. This, indeed, seemed to be the opinion of the cockroaches, which were numerous on board of her as are the sands on the shore. I cannot conscientiously support the assertion of a recent traveller, who avers that he has seen specimens of this useful insect as large as mice, but certainly I have seen them over two inches and a half long. They have a horrible weakness for gnawing the toe-nails of a sleeper, and sailors in the Eastern seas are frequently lamed for weeks by the injuries received in a single night. We managed to keep a great part of them at a distance by carefully tucking in the edges of our mosquito curtains; but at night the cabin was walled, and floored, and ceilinged with

them. Subsequently, a standing reward of ten cents per thousand, offered by the Tuan Mudah for all those legitimately slaughtered on board, somewhat reduced their numbers.

The day after the festivities described in the preceding chapter, the Tuan Mudah, Arthur, and myself went up a branch of the Rejang to Mangis Malita, a settlement of Sakarran Dyaks, who have lately emigrated to these parts in considerable numbers. The particular colony we were about to visit was governed by an old chief named Apilagi, a tried and staunch friend of the Rajah.

We ascended the river in a war-boat of the Kennowits, and no mode of travel that I ever saw can compare with this in picturesque effect. Our boat was seventy feet long, raised in the bows and stern, where it was decorated with carvings of rather indelicate design and very rudimentary execution. A long "kajong," or mat, covered it from stem to stern, and protected our forty-two paddlers from the blaze of the sun. The Tuan Mudah, Arthur, and myself sat in the middle—it might almost be called amidships—and the many-coloured jackets, sarongs, and handkerchiefs of the boatmen formed a gaudy avenue before us and behind. The brilliancy of this fringe, however, was frequently toned down by a bare back of glossy brown or yellow. As we passed along we picked up a number of native chiefs in gala costume, who took up their position between the lines of rowers, thereby breaking our vista; but we were

well compensated for this loss by the beauty of their gold-embroidered garments and the picturesque ugliness of their dingy faces.

No matter what may be the number of its population, a Sea Dyak settlement is always called a "house;" but, to avoid misunderstanding, I will continue to use the word "village," with the explanation that there is never more than one building therein, in which every family of the clan has an apartment.

On arrival at the village of Mangis Malipa, we were enthusiastically welcomed by the populace. I feel that in describing these people I shall be charged with the use of wild superlatives, but if they be not really quite such fine fellows as they appeared to us, it may be remembered that we saw them in comparison with the miserable savages we had lately visited, to whom at least they were a delightful contrast. In physical characteristics they were certainly the finest type we had an opportunity of encountering, and I regret that we were unable to stay for a time among them, more closely to observe their habits and peculiarities. The men were remarkably fine-looking fellows, tall, bright, and stalwart, and most of the younger women were good-looking. Some of them were really pretty in feature, and their beautiful figures were but little concealed by their costume, which was simply a short petticoat. Apilagi's daughter, Tipong by name, was an exceedingly fine girl, and her brothers were the

tallest men of the tribe. Males and females had alike a frank and fearless expression which was very engaging. If they could be prevailed upon to drop the custom of pulling out the eyebrows and blackening the teeth, they would be the most delightful savages possible; and after all, their teeth, while young, are so perfect and regular, that the eye soon becomes accustomed to this jetty colour, which is universally fashionable both among Malays and Dyaks.

There was a girl here whose expression of exquisite melancholy was charming; it was a tender pensiveness, evidently the natural cast of her features, and not caused by any heartbreaking circumstances. Joined to her pretty face and upright supple figure, I have no doubt it had played wild work among these honest Dyaks. *We* fell in love with her instantly, but she laughed at us in the cruellest manner.

The Dyaks, perhaps from the greater simplicity of their lives and their stationary habits, do not suffer the paroxysms of love and jealousy to which Malays are subject, and the horrible custom of running "amok," though not absolutely unknown, is exceedingly rare among them. Chastity and private morality have always stood higher among the land tribes than among those who inhabit the coast; but even with the latter, infidelity to marriage is an almost unheard-of crime. This may be in consequence of the extreme liberty allowed to the unmarried girls, who make choice of a husband at

leisure, and meantime are subject to no restraint or supervision whatever. The Malays, on the contrary, few who know them will deny to be the most immoral and licentious people in the world—at least of those who claim any degree of civilization—but they frequently show an amount of self-abnegation in their love affairs which is not usual among the simpler race. It is true that, since human nature is much the same in Borneo as in England, the Malay lover, when jealous, usually prefers to murder his mistress rather than to set her free; but the Dyak passions are cooller, and their domestic affection far greater, and therefore the occasion to act in a violent manner less frequently arises. In the fort at Kennowit hangs a kris with which a Malay of that town stabbed to death the wife and a slave of the Orang Kaya in a fury of jealousy.

There is a custom among all the Dyak tribes which strongly illustrates their parental pride and affection. As soon as a man has a son born to him he drops his own name, and ever after retains that of his eldest living boy with the prefix "api"—father. Thus when the old chief of Mangis Malipa in his younger days had begotten a boy who was named "Lagi," he disused his former appellation and became "Apilagi." The same custom sometimes obtains in the case of a daughter, but more rarely.

As we returned to our boat, after taking a few portraits, and chatting for a couple of hours with

these pleasant fellows, we passed a hut on the landing-stage in which was preserved a considerable quantity of the valuable jars which principally constitute Dyak wealth. On examination they appeared to be of common earthenware, exceedingly like brown bathing jars, but differing in size, and in having a few rude figures of various animals upon them. The natives recognise various classes and distinctions among these vessels, of which the most valuable is called the "Gusih" kind, and will fetch from 1500 to 3000 dollars. In appearance a jar of this sort is worthless enough; it stands about two feet high, and has rude lug handles about the mouth. On its sides a few figures of deer are roughly scratched. The second kind is not nearly so costly as the Gusih, and is called, I think, the "dragon;" but even for a jar of this second-rate description, which was a portion of the Tuan Mudah's spoil in the Kyan war, he received 400 dollars—nearly 100*l*. The Dyaks attribute magical, or at least medicinal powers, to water contained in these vessels, and the tribe fortunate enough to possess one draws a handsome revenue yearly by the sale of water poured from it to the neighbouring villages. Though the Dutch have several times attempted to pass off European imitations of them, the fraud has always been detected by the natives. Whether at any time a manufactory of earthenware existed upon the island in which these jars were made, or whether they

were imported at some very distant date, is unknown, but their great antiquity is indisputable.

The day after this visit to Mangis Malipa, our Dyak friends returned the call on board the *Venus*, and shortly after their arrival, the Kennowits appeared, thereby enabling us to make a direct comparison between the two races, which was by no means to the advantage of the latter. We sat on the quarter-deck during their stay, with the Kennowits squatted on our right, and the Dyaks on our left. We were deluged with them; they crowded round in front and behind; some sprawled about on the guns or lay balanced along the bulwarks, and numbers of the inferior warriors hung on to the rigging or wandered inquisitively about the vessel. The Dyaks came accompanied by most of their women and children, the Kennowits were all males. The former were smiling, frank, and happy-looking, arrayed in all the bravery of orange and crimson chowats, with bright-coloured sarongs swung loosely over their broad shoulders; innumerable brass rings glittered on their arms, and heavy "chatelaines" tinkled pendent from their ears. The Kennowits were hideous, sullen, and dirty, seeming as if they well deserved the fate of extermination which, it is said, approaches them. They complained that the Dyaks drove them from their paddy grounds and fruit plantations, and that they were not allowed to harvest their rice in peace; but the accused only laughed, and evidently re-

gretted, in a good-humoured sort of way, that they were not permitted to take their enemy's heads also, as in the wild days gone by.

Speaking above of Dyak ear-rings, I have called them "chatelaines." Really I don't know what better name I could find. Here is a description of the miscellaneous objects hanging from the ears of Meringäi, Apilagi's second son. Imprimis, a large brass ring, from which depended, by long chains of brass, two boars' tusks, one alligator's tooth, the upper part of a rhinoceros hornbill's beak scraped pink and yellow, three smaller brass rings, and two little bells. One of the modes of ornamenting the ear in use among the Dyaks is pretty enough, though perhaps barbarous. A hole is bored at the very top of the ear, and through it is passed a small ring about a quarter of an inch in diameter; at a distance of the third part of an inch, another ring, a little larger, is suspended; a still larger one at the same distance from the second; and so on till the lobe of the ear is reached, through which is passed a ring nearly two inches in diameter. The effect is rather elegant, but the organ becomes horribly deformed and shapeless. Sometimes two holes only are pierced, one at the top and one at the lobe of the ear, by means of which a brass plate is held along the outside, to which the rings are attached.

The Dyaks brought down with them an Albino, a monstrosity which is not very rare in their country. He was a miserable looking wretch; his

skin, of an unhealthy white, was almost concealed with great blotches of sun-freckle; his hair was of no known colour; his eyes were of a pale grey, but he was quite unable to raise them from the ground in consequence of the sun-glare from the river; he told us, in fact, that he never could look up for more than a glance when the sun was above the horizon. However, he was unmistakeably a white man, and the Dyaks rejoiced in him accordingly. These manly, frank-hearted fellows from Mangis Malipa contented themselves with harmless chaff about the absurdity of white men in the Tropics, but sometimes these Albinos have been the cause of disagreeable scenes. We were told that the parents of this specimen were both of the national colour, but that all his brothers and sisters were Albinos, and also that several of his ancestors had shown the same peculiarity.

The Kennowit women whom we had seen at the Fort came to call on the Tuan Mudah. The ceremony was precisely similar; one old lady squatted on the floor and talked, the rest squatted on the floor and held their tongues. They were overflowing with complaints against the Dyaks, but the younger women seemed much more interested in a silent but attentive examination of our appearance and habits than in listening to the patriotic wailings of their voluble old spokeswoman.

Every day single Dyaks came down to see us, and there were always a few roaming harmlessly

about the vessel. Their smiling request was ever the same, "Please, Tuan, may I go and take a head?" The tribe from whom the head was to be taken varied according to the family or personal feuds of the petitioner, but one fellow very anxious indeed to perform some ceremony or propitiation for which, as he asserted, a head was absolutely necessary, when permission to seek one among the Kyans was refused, appealed to the Tuan Mudah's knowledge of anthropology, and begged to be at least allowed to kill a Pakatan. "For," said he, "they are only wild beasts." It is needless to say that his request, though put in this innocent form, was sternly refused.

These Pakatans are a remarkable race, of whom little is at present known. They are found only in the densest jungle, and are said to have no habitations save hollow trees and natural caverns. They wander continually about the forests, and by their skill in woodcraft easily avoid contact. Should any man, however, wander into a district for which they have a momentary preference, he is instantly attacked with the deadly "sumpitan" or blowpipe. And yet one of this race, who was taken prisoner some time ago, appeared, in the opinion of Europeans who saw him, to be handsome and intelligent in expression beyond the other races of the island. It seemed difficult, however, to detect any syllabification in his utterance, though there is little doubt that the Pakatans are possessed of a language

of some rude description. This prisoner was much fairer even than the Milanowes, the lightest of the Bornean tribes, and his body was tatooed in blue arabesques, like those of the Kyans and the Kennowits. It seems opposed to all former experience that the most barbarous race of a country should be that most favoured by nature.

The Bazaar of Kennowit extends for some distance along the river bank, and is occupied principally by Malays intermixed with a few Chinamen. The houses are built upon piles about fifteen feet high, with a broad verandah in front, and a narrower one behind. All goods are scrupulously stored within the dwellings, for the Kyans and the Dyaks from the upper parts of the river consider themselves at liberty to take for their own use any article exposed on the verandah or hanging to the outer wall. As individuals, or occasionally small parties, of these people sometimes descend to the town, some care is necessary in arranging goods, but the visitors are scrupulously honest, and were never known to appropriate anything from the interior of the dwelling. Serious disputes have sometimes arisen from this awkward habit, but the strangers have justice on their side, for, as they say, "You accept our custom when you visit us, and make free use of everything placed outside our houses, and we will do the same by you when we come to your towns."

All the buildings of Kennowit are very dilapidated; for the trading population do not care to

spend time or money in repairs, when they have long been expecting the order to abandon their settlement and to remove to a new situation some distance down the river. The logs and clapboards of bilian* for the new fort are all prepared and lie along the bank ready for transportation, and some days before we left, a "pachara" or council was held by the Tuan Mudah at the Court House, to explain the advantages of the measure to the population, and to hear any suggestion which the chiefs might offer. The Court House at Kennowit is similar in miniature to the one I have described at Kuching. When the natives were assembled, we all went down to it, and sat cross-legged upon the ground, while the Tuan Mudah addressed the audience. There was not much speaking; everyone was delighted that the long desired change had come at last, and no one seemed to object to the arrangements. One or two old gentlemen in gorgeous garments and Persian turbans, embroidered with gold thread, put in a few remarks, but they were purely of a personal and complimentary nature. The Malays are always polite, but that is a general characteristic of Maho-

* Bilian is the native name for iron-wood. In many parts of Borneo this is an exceedingly common tree in the jungle, where it is easily distinguished by its dark-coloured bark and pale green foliage. The timber is wonderfully hard if attacked unskilfully, but the Malay and Chinese carpenters split it easily. A house built of this wood will last for centuries, and a family whose house is raised on bilian piles will carefully dig them up on removal to be again used.

medan peoples. They gradually lose the virtue from contact with Europeans, principally perhaps because they find the practice all on one side; but from the studied kindness and consideration with which all natives are treated by the Sarawak officers, we may hope that in their country Oriental courtesy may permanently abide.

The standard currency of Borneo is brass guns. This is not a figure of speech, nor do I mean small pistols or blunderbusses, but real cannon, five to ten feet long, and heavy in proportion. The metal is estimated at so much a picul, and articles are bought and sold, and change given, by means of this awkward coinage. The picul contains one hundred catties* each of which weighs 1⅓ English pounds; consequently the picul is 133⅓lbs. There is one great advantage about this currency—it is not easily stolen. Outside the fort at Kennowit lie guns representing many hundred dollars, and there they have reposed for years in perfect safety. The iron coinage of Lycurgus was not a fiftieth part so cumbersome. The guns are mostly manufactured at Bruni, and many of them are very graceful in form and richly ornamented about the trunnions with arabesques. Regarded as instruments of war they have considerable value, throwing a solid shot to a great distance with surprising accuracy; but they

* Tea purchased in small quantities is frequently enclosed in boxes containing one catty. I offer a diffident suggestion that this may possibly be the derivation of our familiar "tea-caddy.

are soon heated, and for that reason become useless in rapid firing.

Opposite the bazaar is a little circular gambling house, from which a great uproar was issuing whenever we passed it. Chinese and Malays were its principal frequenters, and we once saw a Celestial speculator emerge in a wild state of cursing and distraction. These establishments are the cause of many men becoming "amok," and are not permitted in Kuching. The natives of the Rejang, however, are hardly yet so firmly settled under the Government as to justify an unpopular innovation.

The fort of which Fox and Steele had the command is now partly pulled down, and the remainder occupied by a Malay family. The poor fellows were slain within a few yards of each other; one was run through with a spear as he strolled unsuspiciously round the moat after breakfast; the other was cut down on the bridge a few moments afterwards in returning from the Bazaar. When the town was again subdued some of the murderers were captured, but two of them escaped to the country of the Kyans, who declined to surrender them. The war just concluded when we reached Sarawak had been principally occasioned by this refusal, but after the invasion of their territory, the Kyans consented to give up the single survivor, and he was "krised" at Kuching some months after our return. The chiefs of the nation were to have come down to ratify peace with solemn ceremonies, and the object of

Tuan Mudah's voyage was to be present on the occasion, but the warriors did not appear, and in their place a rumour gained ground that a Kyan herald had been murdered in coming from them. The fact afterwards turned out to be that some of the lawless natives of the Rejang lay in wait for the party of chiefs as it descended the river, and took ten heads from them, losing, however, thirteen of their own in the engagement. The remainder of the Kyan deputation, suspecting treachery, returned home.

Whatever might be the cause, it was evident that the chiefs were not at the rendezvous, and we could not hear that they were on the way, so, when we had gone through all the sights of Kennowit, from the ruins of the old fort to Mr. Cruickshank's wonderful "brok"* Boy, we prepared to return. But the Tuan Mudah had letters to send to Bintulu, and he invited us to cruise in the *Jolly* as far as that place. We were delighted with the opportunity, and on the fifth of September began to descend the river in company with the *Venus*, firing great guns as we went. This demonstration was intended to freshen the memory of the Kennowits that the Rajah's gunboats were incontrovertible truths, a fact they were something apt to forget.

* "Brok" is the native term for "ape." I shall have a future opportunity of describing the monkeys we met with in Borneo.

We parted company with the *Venus* at the point where the Rejang and the Egan unite their waters. Our companions followed the course of the former towards Kuching, and we entered the stream of the latter, which flows into the sea some thirty miles nearer our destination. The Egan intersects a vast marshy plain covered with impenetrable jungle, and very sparsely inhabited. Two days we followed its course. Sometimes a solid wall of vegetation arose on either bank; sometimes, for miles on miles, extended the broad fringe of mangroves, whose light green foliage vainly strove to hide the foul slime from which they sprang. No song of bird or cry of beast broke the sultry silence. A heavy fruit fell from some giant branch into the water with resounding splash, or some laggard monkey rustled faintly among the leaves in escaping after his companions. The splended blue king-fisher sat half asleep upon his bough, or suddenly swooped down on rainbow wing. The snow-white plumage of the solemn paddy-bird glimmered for a moment under the slimy bushes. Without a breath of wind our little craft swung slowly down the tide, and we lay under the awning in panting yet not unpleasant prostration. Hour after hour passed by without a sound reaching our ears, save the shrill voices of the sailors and the wash of the water. Is there a land in the temperate zone which can show, through all its length and breadth, the living beauty that exists in one acre of tropical jungle? Our

seas, mountains, and skies are not so blue, our woods have not such a green, our trees are mere shrubs, our vegetation has no variety.

But when night comes on, and the silver moonlight spreads over the landscape, illumining the great masses of vegetation and rippling over the blackened water;—when the bell of the wild deer comes in music from the glades, and a thousand vague but pleasant sounds arise from jungle and river;—when the frogs boom in low thunder from the morass, and swarms of fireflies flash among the trees in a sheet of living flame;—then, indeed, the European must confess the poverty of his own scenery, and ask in wonder why such a land as this is peopled with such a race.

When we reached the open sea we were attacked by the squalls and head winds consequent on the change in the monsoons. After two days buffeting we made Muka, a town of the Milanowes, where is a strong fort and an important station of the Borneo Company. The *Jolly* hove to off the bar to deliver letters, and a boat called the *Anak Ular*, or *Young Snake*, put off from the town to receive them. Muka is celebrated for its swift sampans, and the *Anak Ular* has a reputation even at Muka, but although we were prepared to see great speed, she fairly astonished us with her rapidity in the heavy sea in which we rode.

Three days more of bad weather took us to Bintulu, the farthest station of the Sarawak govern-

ment. We cast anchor outside the bar, for Captain Micheson, of the *Jolly Bachelor*, had already lost a gunboat on the sands there, and was determined to remain for the future on the safe side. In fact, when we had crossed the bar in the gig, although the sea was quite calm outside, we found the surf so tremendous, that we preferred to land some distance from the fort and proceed on foot along the beach. All along this coast the surf is very heavy, and the fort of Muka is absolutely closed for a considerable portion of the year. With a melancholy interest we surveyed the timbers of the gunboat *Badger*, lost on a calm day here by Captain Micheson some time ago, and whose skeleton ribs still projected above the sand.

We met Captain Rodway, the Resident, on the beach, and accompanied him home. The unfortunate man was in an advanced stage of misery and destitution; all his stores had been given out, the half-monthly issue of rice to his fortmen was overdue, and they, like himself, were already on short rations. A pleasant welcome was all he could offer, but we were able in some measure to relieve his personal distress by ordering our own provisions and liquor from the gunboat.

The fort stands about fifty yards from the sea, and, barring that it is quite indefensible, is an agreeable habitation enough. The gates open on a courtyard, with the apartments of the resident on the left and the fortmen's quarters on the right. A gallery

over the entrance connects the two parts, and so far the plan of the building is admirable for its purpose. On the other hand, however, we were told on good authority that if one of the large guns on the first floor were fired, it must inevitably burst from its seizings, and crash through into the abode of darkness beneath. Like all other fortified buildings in this country the lower story has no windows, and is disused except as a bathing-room.

Bintulu is situated at the mouth of a river of the same name, and the growth of trade is rapidly increasing its importance and population. Nothing in Sarawak is more gratifying than the remarkable extension of the Malay settlements—at present they can scarcely be called towns—in every district. I have already remarked that the houses at Kennowit are falling into decay, merely because for many months the inhabitants have been constantly expecting the removal of their Resident and principal families to a more favourable situation some distance down the river, and there is no doubt the town erected there will be upon a much handsomer scale than the old settlement. At Bintulu large residences are building for the native chiefs and rich traders; and though it may be true that with greater wealth they all seem inclined to indulge in great extravagance—especially in the matter of wives—still, through all human history, the civilization of the many has entailed the luxury of the few, and a nation so widely spread and for-

merly so powerful as the Malay, seems worthy of a more exalted position in the world than it can boast at present.

That a people like this, who already suffer many of the inconveniences and all the vices of civilized life, should rise to the enjoyment of its advantages likewise all humanity must desire; but what comfort or reward can our boasted refinement offer to the Dyak that we should urge him to embrace it? The noble savage has no place in my creed—I have seen so many—but let Europe look around these seas, and observe the results of her ameliorating influence. The Javanese have been civilized, and are discontented Helots; the Dyaks and Malays of Banjermasin, Sambas, and Pontianak have been driven wild with civilization; in the South Seas the natives are dying in heaps from the introduction of our beneficent institutions; the Malays of Singapore are gradually driven out by swarms of Chinamen, attracted by the genius of dollars and civilization; we introduce it to Japan in gunboats, and disseminate it by bombardment; in the Manillas the Spaniards urge on the cause by slow extermination. We know the world was encircled by water, that Liverpool might send her vessels to every coast and distribute Manchester cotton to all the nations, but mingled with his cheap prints and his Sheffield cutlery, the British trader carries materials of very different nature. War and drunkenness, and depopulation, and all uncleanness, accompany

him, and spread far and wide over the land. It may be that the evil and the good are not inseparable, that the simple ones of the earth may be taught the refinements of Europe, and yet be injured in no way; but search modern history, and in the North and South and East and West the story is ever the same—we come, we civilize, and we corrupt or exterminate.

What can we offer the Dyaks in exchange for their simple happiness? In their own glorious climate a little labour suffices to produce much bread; their clothing is neither purple nor fine linen, but it suits their need; no wild beasts infest their lands that they should seek fire-arms; and their wars are destructive enough without the introduction of gunpowder. If they could but be persuaded that their every want is satisfied—that they are far more comfortable than the restless trader who sells to them! But they will not believe; and if the Garden of Eden were again to be lost, Eve would be tempted by a yard of grey shirting or Turkey red, and Adam corrupted by a wretched German blunderbuss.

Talking is of no avail. Dollars weigh heavier than words, whether silver or golden; and I suppose when their turn comes, the Dyaks will be exterminated, as many a good, brave, simple race has been before, and will be, till the Millennium dawns upon the East, and the Englishman and the Chinese divide the lands and the dollars between them.

When we visited Bintulu, one of the fortmen was in confinement for an affair which showed the strong affection of which Malays are sometimes capable. He had fallen in love with a slave girl, and she strongly reciprocated his attachment, but the unsympathizing authorities did not view the matter with a favourable eye; somehow they never do when the story is at all romantic. The connexion had already subsisted some months between the pair, when they conceived an idea that some design was on foot to separate them, and, in the absence of her lover, the woman, overpowered by her misery, stabbed herself a dozen times in the most devoted but irrational manner. The lover returned in time to see his mistress expire, which worked him into the state to which Malays are liable, called "amok," or, in English corruption, "amuck." Instead, however, of following the usual custom, and avenging his misfortunes upon all sorts of people who had nothing whatever to do with them, he preferred to cut himself deliberately to pieces, and, considering that Bintulu is a very peaceable district, where opportunities for practice were necessarily few, his decision was by no means despicable. Without entering into the catalogue of horrid wounds described to us, of which he bore evident traces months afterwards, it will be sufficient to say that sixteen wounds were found on his limbs and body, most of them dangerous. So full of life, however, are these Malays, owing no doubt to their simple diet and obedience to the Pro-

phet's command of total abstinence from spirituous liquids, that he finally recovered, and was prepared to take passage to Kuching with us in the *Jolly*, there to be dismissed the service, and to suffer what other punishments I cannot say. I never heard his ultimate fate.

There is a broad beach here, which sometimes affords capital hunting. The usual mode is to send as many Dyaks as can be collected into the jungle with their dogs, to drive the game on to the sands where the sportsman is awaiting it with his rifle. Rather poor sort of sport some may think who have read descriptions of hand-to-hand struggles with lions, and buffaloes, and boa-constrictors in South Africa; but a tropical jungle is a very different hunting-ground from the broad grassy plains of the Cape or the open forests of the Himalaya. The woods in the higher districts of Borneo are pleasant walking enough, owing to the absence of undergrowth, but in the low-lying plains five miles a day is about as much as a European can make under ordinary circumstances. Every hundred yards or so a thicket is reached which is absolutely impassable, and it becomes necessary to make a détour. Bamboos, lianas, gigantic ferns, sharp palmettos, all manner of thorny shrubs, seize the traveller in their grasp and drive him to distraction. Perspiration drips from his clothing, ants and stinging insects settle upon his face, myriads of leeches swarm up his trousers, he trips over an un-

seen trailing plant and crashes headlong into the coils of some hideous serpent, or anon his course is barred by a black steaming pool, with an alligator lying motionless in the centre, watching him out of its green and death-like eye. No man who has wandered twenty yards in a tropical jungle ever dreamed of attempting the feat again, unless under force of absolute necessity. How then do the Dyaks manage, is a question which naturally arises, and which, I am sorry to say, I cannot answer. A dim suspicion has often crossed my mind, when hunting in this manner, that the gay deceivers advance about ten yards and then squat down in a dry place, in perfect confidence that no one will follow them, while their dogs search the jungle and drive out the game. Whether this idea be correct or not, the Dyaks are generally accredited with some half-miraculous power for forcing their way through the most impenetrable wilderness.

But it was now the paddy season, and natives were not to be tempted from home. By means of immense exertions, however, we obtained one man, two boys, and three dogs, with which we beat the jungle for three hours, and started nothing but birds. The Dyak dog-call is curious. The act of whistling is unknown to them, and as no instrument has as yet been discovered answering that purpose, they cover the mouth with the fingers, and emit a peculiar mournful cry, which, though very low, can be heard for a considerable distance,

and sounds like the wail of some melancholy wood-nymph.

I should not have mentioned this unsuccessful expedition but that we were accompanied by a wealthy Mikodah, or merchant-captain, who brought with him all his slaves and servants, to the number of forty-three, each of whom was armed with a spear. Our own party turned out eight or ten more, and when all the weapons were thrust point upwards into the sand at luncheon time they looked like a steel-tipped wood, and we sat down comfortably under their shadow.

Next day arrived a German vessel, which cruises about the coast and trades with the out-stations, and the Resident's anxiety about his supplies was happily at an end. As we sat over our letters and newspapers, discussing Lee's retreat from Washington, detailed in the mail just arrived, a case was brought before Capt. Rodway which shows the difficulties of a semi-barbarous people when brought in contact with the fixed principles of European justice.

It appeared that our friend the Nikodah Druman, "of the spears," had made an advance to another chief of some brass guns, which, as I have observed, are the money of this country. The agreement was that he should receive their value in gutta-percha, to be paid by instalments, extending over three years, of which two had now elapsed. Gutta-percha, however, has been rising steadily in

price ever since the transaction, and since a brass gun of so many pounds' weight represents an absolute sum in dollars, it followed that, according to the present price of the gun, the debt had long been discharged, and the borrower refused to pay any more instalments. The case had puzzled all the native chiefs, so they brought it before their Resident, who of course gave judgment for the Nicodah. It is difficult for those educated in the midst of a sound system for such matters to conceive how these simple fellows are perplexed by the variation of prices, and the confusion of the brass-gun currency, caused by the introduction of dollars. They always seem anxious to act rightly, and are acute enough in criminal cases, but become puzzled by the contradictory aspect which can be put on a civil transaction like that described by a clever casuist.

Both chiefs were arrayed in many colours. Nicodah Druman spread himself out like a peacock in an arm-chair, as soon as I expressed a wish to take his portrait. He was about five feet three inches in height, and his features were very broad, very smooth, very yellow, and very good-natured. On his big head was gracefully folded a Javanese handkerchief, with an edging of gold-lace an inch broad; his jacket, of thin black cloth, was closed to the throat with gold buttons; wide trousers of crimson satin, with a pattern of leaves and flowers, almost concealed his bare feet; a sarong of madder-colour, handsomely embroidered with silver, was wrapped

round his waist, and over that was another of thick silk woven in bars of purple, and green, and crimson, and yellow.

The defendant wore a "pangeran" jacket of blue silk, with a high collar, which, like the cuffs, front, and seams, was stiff with gold work; his head was adorned with a laced handkerchief like the Nicodah's, and his silken trousers were profusely embroidered in gold. He wore only one sarong, but that was of crimson silk, and each square of its tartan was ornamented with a design in gold thread. On the whole, I should think the clothes on either of the two, if fairly valued, would be found of as much value as the gutta-percha in question.

Neither of them was armed; but a Malay seldom goes any distance from home without his kris or parang. The graceful shape of the kris is too well known in England to need particular description; it exactly resembles the flaming sword seen waving at the gates of Eden in the illustrations of an old Bible. These weapons will bring a great price, and the more valuable specimens are difficult to obtain. As an instrument of war, the kris is now little used, and, in fact, occupies among the Malays much the same position that a court sword does with us. The best kinds are manufactured in Bruni, but the Soolu pirates also make them of a large size, and very beautiful. A Bruni blade, entirely without ornament, will cost from 10 to 100 dollars; a Soolu, from 16 to 100 dollars. The hilt of a small kris is

of polished wood or ivory set at right angles to the blade, and, among the wealthier classes, is richly adorned with gold and jewels. The natives profess to distinguish a weapon which has been stained with blood from one hitherto unused, and place much greater value on the former; but this, of course, is partly imagination and partly humbug. The older the kris the higher they esteem it, and some were offered to us worn to a thin riband by corrosion of the lime juice, which is used to preserve the metal from rust. This acid it is which gives the blade the dull, rough surface, and sharp but saw-like edge generally seen among them; when new they are smooth and bright, but the centre is damascened, or inlaid with silver. The kris is common to all nations of Malay extraction, except the New Zealanders, and throughout the Archipelago takes the place of our gallows. Their mode of execution by its means is curious and characteristic.

The criminal is led unbound to the place of execution, and takes his seat quietly in an arm-chair; usually chewing penang to the last moment. The kris used on such occasions is about eighteen inches long, and quite straight. Grasping this instrument, the executioner steps up gently behind the prisoner, and thrusts it in to the hilt between the left shoulder and the neck. The heart is pierced instantaneously, the criminal leaps up from his chair, and falls dead. There is a story told, but I know not with how

much truth, of the son of an executioner, very well known in the far East, who not long ago was called upon to perform his father's duties. Not being used to the work, he made his thrust over the right shoulder, and, consequently, missed the heart. Without any confusion at the horrible result, he dragged out his kris, and saying, coolly, "Ah! that was wrong, I know!" struck again in the proper spot, and this time with success.

The Malays have a reputation for treachery and cruel practices, which they do not seem to deserve. Torture is never permitted, and they retaliate the charge of treachery on their accusers. Human life is not highly esteemed among them, it is true, but the same may be said of all races inhabiting a tropical climate, and "krising" is considered a merciful death. An independent chieftain, well known in Singapore, is said to have crucified some rebels who fell into his hands while we were in Sarawak. His "pangerans" remonstrated strongly with him, urging that torture was repugnant to human nature and opposed to the customs of their ancestors. "Very true," replied the Tumangong, "but it is the English practice; they persuaded me to read their sacred books, and in them I found an account of it." If the story be not true it is droll, but whether these unfortunates were crucified or not, I can aver positively that the Tumangong is a very handsome, courteous gentleman, who gives his friends a very good dinner, and sits with them while

they drink capital wine from his cellars. It is possible that in the sanctity of the domestic circle he does not obey the Prophet's commandment quite so strictly as in company.

The "parang latok" is a weapon peculiar to the Malays, who use it with great skill; but its singular shape, incomprehensible at first sight, and at all times objectionable, has effectually barred its popularity among foreign nations. The blade is about two feet long and a couple of inches broad at the point, from which it narrows down to the junction of the hilt, where it becomes square, and half an inch thick. The hilt is bent at an obtuse angle to the blade, which makes the instrument exceedingly awkward to handle; and, in fact, when used for chopping wood or any peaceful purpose, the grasp is taken at the bend and not at the hilt. In war, however, the full length of the parang is used, and it must be evident, on reflection, that its cut will be very severe, since, in consequence of its peculiar bend, the edge is involuntarily drawn through the wound from hilt to point, thereby enlarging and deepening the gash. Like the kris, the "parang latok" is falling into disuse for warlike service, for sword-blades can be imported so cheaply from Europe, and are found so convenient, that they are generally preferred. A Malay, however, is as much embarrassed by the roomy hilt, which we consider most serviceable, as an Englishman is with the tiny, cramped grasp in which the native delights.

The race is naturally small-handed, but their sword-hilts seem too little for the fingers of a child. It is found, however, that this is not the case; and I have met with several Indian officers who considered the native system to be the most effective. The hilt is made of brass, with a short, thick cross-guard, from which depends a graceful sword-knot of crimson silk, with a silver mounting. The sheath is of wood, formed in two pieces, wonderfully fitted together, and decorated with silver. English or German steel is not esteemed so highly by them as that of their own production, and not, I think, without some reason. The metal of which valuable weapons are made is said to be manufactured from files, which are imported in large quantities. It is certainly tougher than our ordinary sword metal, and sometimes more highly tempered. In several instances, our hunting knives, which professed to be the finest steel possible, broke and gapped, when the native parangs were not in the least injured.

In executing a criminal with the "parang latok," the condemned man is made to kneel down on the ground, and the headsman, standing at his side and a little behind him, generally succeeds in striking off the head at one blow. I have in my possession a very heavy parang, with which, at an emergency, Dout, a policeman at Kuching, who has distinguished himself on more than one occasion, struck off the heads of two criminals with two successive

blows, standing between them as they knelt on the ground. Upon another occasion, when the howling of the large Chinese dogs in the Bazaar disturbed the proceedings in the Court House, Dout dashed into the road, armed with the same weapon, and with one blow cut in two the first of the noisy animals that was so unfortunate as to encounter him.

CHAPTER VI.

A Hot Pull—Malay Modes of Fishing—Muka Trade—Town—Siege by Rajah Brooke—Officers Lost by the Rajah—Diseases of the Country—Muka Fort—Boa Constrictor—Black Monkeys—Milanowe—Boat Race—Saw Fish—Hospitality of Mr. Miller—A Close Shave—Floating Island—Water Snakes—Departure of the Rajah—Santubong—Cocoa-nut Beetles—Turtles—A Narrow Escape—Leeches—Chinese Riots—A Sunday Walk through the Jungle—Sandflies—Ascent of the Mountain—Ants—Building a House.

CAPTAIN RODWAY had charge of Bintulu fort in the absence of Mr. Paul, the usual Resident. I am afraid that the inhabitants of the building will have reason to remember our visit for many a month. We incautiously skinned a "musang," or wild-cat, in the court-yard, and the smell of musk was stifling as long as we remained Captain Rodway's guests.

On the fourteenth of September we re-embarked for Muka, and two days afterwards cast anchor off the bar. Captain Micheson, Arthur, and myself embarked in the gig with half-a-dozen sailors, and put off for shore. At first we allowed the men to row, but on finding that our rate of progression bore a very indifferent ratio to the number engaged at the oar, we reflected that the heat

could not be perceptibly greater to the rowers than to the rowed, and that if we three took the oars with the best of our lazy Malays to balance the work, we should advance at a much more satisfactory pace, and take healthful exercise in addition. Accordingly we sent the sailors aft, and took their places. A warmer or a faster pull than was ours over those three miles we never expect, or indeed desire, but we held on bravely to the end, and were received with considerable admiration by the agent of the Borneo Company, who met us at the landing wharf, attended by a numerous body of awe-struck spectators. Great should be the wisdom and severe the dignity of the Englishman after an amusement such as this, or he will surely be regarded by these lazy Orientals as an irresponsible maniac. No equivalent for "supererogation" exists in the pleasant Malay language, or, if there be such a word, it is an empty sound.

In entering the river mouth, we passed a large assembly of the youthful population of Muka, catching fish with great enthusiasm. They had bivouacked upon the sand, and around their tents and huts were piled up all sorts of extraordinary monsters ready for sale or salting. All possible colours of scale and skin were displayed among the captures. One of the most remarkable species had a slender body and a long nose, glowing with the tints of an illuminated carbuncle; another kind, which seemed to be used as bait, was flat and fleshy when

first captured, but disappeared in a thick black liquid after a few moments. On examining the pool thus created, we discovered a shapeless mass about a quarter of the monster's original size, which appeared to be all that remained of him. Then there were skates, blue, crimson, and spotted, great eels, young sharks, flat bony fish like bream, and others all over spines and prickles. On that tongue of sand was a year's enjoyment for an ichthyologist.

Besides the net and hook, which appear common to all the world, the Malays have a method of taking fish which I never saw practised among another people. By driving stakes into the sand they construct a series of traps, each opening into the next, until the chain stretches out to sea fifty yards. The fish wander from one to another till they reach the last, which is constructed like a square eel-trap and answers the same purpose; the prey gets in with the greatest ease, but has not sense to find its way out again. In a river, or upon a beach sufficiently shallow to allow the erection of the stakes at some distance from the shore, a considerable quantity may be captured every day; but under ordinary circumstances the fish are small, and not very numerous. The cage, however, requires little attention when once constructed, and consequently every bay and river contains its long array of bamboo stakes.

Muka is the most important of the Borneo Company's trade stations. The sago trees are floated

down the river to this place, and the pith is there extracted. The path from the wharf to the agent's house is whitened over with flour, and the air is redolent of sago. During the drying process, this pith, hereafter to be so sanitary and insipid, gives forth an odour not easily equalled for strength and ill savour; but we were given to understand that, even in this stage, the esculent distributes health to all within smelling distance.

Here is also the principal seat of the Dyak trade in gutta-percha and ratans. The latter is used for ship cordage all through these seas, and excellently does it answer that purpose; the former is chiefly exported to Europe, but the supply is already falling off. Stimulated by the sudden value placed upon their gum, the Dyaks are cutting down the trees wherever encountered, and by that means extracting the sap in a mass. A full-grown tree is now rare in the jungle, and expostulation with the Dyaks is quite useless. The gutta-percha tree requires so many years' growth before it can be safely and profitably tapped, that no plantations have as yet been formed to secure a supply when the wild trees shall have disappeared, and in a very few years Europe will be deprived of the large supply of this useful material now obtained from Borneo. The gutta, when brought to Muka, is usually twisted into fantastic shapes, and in every cargo one mass is found presenting a rude resemblance to an alligator. Several of these were preserved at Mr. Miller's house, and had been doubt-

less intended as a sort of charm or propitiation to the spirits of the jungle. I shall have a future opportunity of speaking of the Dyak belief in "antus" or wood-devils.

Many other trees, yielding valuable gum, are found in the forests of Sarawak. The generic Malay name "damar" has been applied by the English exclusively to one species, the most common and most productive. The lofty tree from which our "damar" exudes has thin light foliage, and great masses of dry gum usually pave the ground at its foot.

Muka still bears evident traces of its siege in 1860. This was the most serious operation in which Sir James Brooke has hitherto been called upon to engage, and its issue, successful in despite of the governor of Labuan, has had a great share in inspiring the respect and deference which is now shown to him by all the native powers in these seas. With full permission from the Sultan of Bruni, to whom these territories at that time belonged, Sir James laid siege to the town in reprisal for many acts of hostility and aggression. Headed by Shereef Musahore,* who had attempted to organize a rebellion in Sarawak to co-operate with that raging at

* The Shereefs are Arab descendants of the Prophet, and, consequently, they wear green robes and turbans. There are a considerable number of them in Borneo, and they are continually exciting the religious enthusiasm of the people, and causing disorder. The Hajis (or Mecca pilgrims) and the Shereefs are the curse of the country.

the time in Sambas and Bangermasin, the people of Muka prepared for a stout defence. They raised the fort now occupied by the resident officer of the Rajah, erected numerous stockades and batteries, and planted huge stakes and tree-trunks across the river to prevent approach by water. The stakes are mostly still erect, but sufficient gaps have been made to allow the free passage of trading vessels. The Rajah attacked the town with the *Venus*, *Jolly Bachelor*, and *Badger* gunboats, while a land force co-operated. In the midst of the operations the governor of Labuan sent to command the immediate discontinuance of hostilities, backing his order by the despatch of a war steamer. Sir James Brooke instantly complained to the English government; Mr. Edwards, the governor of Labuan, suddenly resigned his post, and in the following year Muka and Bintulu were triumphantly added to the Sarawak territory. A yearly payment of 6000 dollars secured the Rajah from the interference of the Sultan of Bruni, and the two towns immediately entered upon a career of prosperity which threatens shortly to rival the commercial supremacy of the capital. Captain Micheson, at that time in command of the *Badger*, subsequently lost at Bintulu, received a bullet in the cheek while bombarding the fort, being the only white man injured during the operations.

Fortune has favoured the Rajah's officers in most of their undertakings, and war has been very

merciful to them. In all their dangerous expeditions against the natives, Mr. Stuart and Mr. Lee alone have fallen, and the death of the former was occasioned by imprudent disobedience to the Rajah's orders. Messrs. Fox and Steele were treacherously murdered; two children of Mr. Middleton's lost their lives in the surprise of Kuching by the Chinese; a gentleman on a visit from Singapore perished on the same occasion; these are the only English who as yet have died by the hand of an enemy. Disease has been more fatal; during our stay the poor fellow who commanded the police died of fever, regretted by all for his temperance,—that rare virtue in the tropics—and his faithful discharge of duty; since our departure, Lee, the sergeant of Kuching fort, has been reported dead. Mr. Brereton, the first Resident of Sakarran, was cut off by jungle fever, and a few others have been lost at various times, but on the whole Sir James Brooke may be pronounced singularly fortunate in the longevity of his officers.

The peculiar diseases to which an Englishman is liable in this country are not numerous. First, and most disagreeable of all, comes ague, the inevitable concomitant of tropical life. It usually spares the European for the first months of his residence, but when it has once seized upon his body, it returns again and again at irregular intervals. Should the sufferer get safely over the first few attacks this fever is rarely fatal, but the

constitution may be so shattered by its recurrence as finally to succumb to a trifling ailment. The earliest symptoms are pains in the back, disinclination to move, and intense headache; it yields readily to quinine, but with each attack the dose must be augmented, and the remedy is finally almost powerless. Sarawak is not more liable to this plague than other tropical countries, but the two following diseases are peculiar to Borneo and the Straits Settlements.

A form of elephantiasis which is common among the natives frequently attacks the European resident also. Its first stage is painful, but, when the limb has ceased swelling, the pain passes away unless brought on by violent exertion. The ankle is the only part affected, nor does that joint swell so much as to cripple the leg or prevent easy motion. Both ankles are seldom attacked at the same time, but the disease leaps from one to the other in a capricious manner, which is very perplexing,—the one diminishing and the other increasing in size simultaneously. No effectual remedy has hitherto been discovered for "untut," but a complete change of air will always give relief. Few of the officers have escaped its visitations, which are rather disagreeable than dangerous.

The natives apply the term "corrip" to all affections of the skin, two kinds of which are especially prevalent. One Dyak at least in every three exhibits the ordinary form of corrip, which is un-

sightly enough, but not at all detrimental to general health. The body is covered over with white spots and patches, which itch terribly; immediate and unreasonable scratching then becomes necessary to comfort, which causes the diseased skin to roughen and hang in tatters from the limbs. "Corrip" is said not to be hereditary, and I have seen a child of a few months old whose body was affected while his mother was quite free. Under ordinary circumstances it does not appear to be infectious, but the Englishmen who have suffered are of opinion that it sometimes becomes so. Natives are so accustomed to its presence that all disgust has died out, and the European soon loses his first feeling of horror. As in "untut" so in "corrip," medicine has hitherto proved useless, but just before our departure a Malay sprang into notoriety by professing to cure it without difficulty, and reports of great success reached us, which we will hope were veracious. The other form of "corrip" is horribly disgusting, and I will only say of it, that the whole body of the sufferer breaks out in pustules; it is rare among natives, and in one instance only has a European been infected. No recognised medicine will remove this disease, but the charlatan mentioned above claimed power over all forms of "corrip."

The impression prevalent in England that Sarawak is an unhealthy country will be seen from this account to be without foundation. Fever is inseparable from tropical life, and the native suffers

from it in almost an equal degree with the European; the other diseases to which the latter is liable are in no way dangerous, and change of air alone is needed to remove the worst of them.

Owing to the resignation of Mr. Hay, whose post had not yet been filled, Muka fort was untenanted during our visit; it is the largest of the out-station buildings, and seems admirably adapted both for comfort and defence, though originally constructed by Malay rebels. From its lofty upper floor we could see the distant sago plantations bounding the green jungle like a dense dark wall, and far beyond appeared the blue summits of mysterious hills, untrodden by European feet, and unnamed by civilised man. On the other side, the river winded between banks studded with penang and cocoa palms, and picturesque huts glimmered through the graceful foliage; beyond these again a verdant swamp of mangroves lay quivering in the fierce heat as far as the sparkling ocean, where our little gunboat sat in hazy solitude.

While we wandered about the building the fort-men discovered a boa constrictor roaming about the lower story. After a short scrimmage he was destroyed and spread out on the grass for our inspection; on measurement we found his length to be $11\frac{1}{2}$ feet. A small boa is frequently turned loose in a house to exterminate rats and other vermin, and very well does he perform this duty, but he usually

wanders off before attaining any considerable size, and another is obtained to supply the vacancy. In the bungalow we occupied at Kuching lived one of these reptiles, who put my brother and myself into a terrible fright one morning, as I will faithfully describe hereafter. In the absence of any available boa, a musang—a sort of wild cat—is sometimes kept for the same purpose.

Towards sunset a commotion was visible among the mangroves opposite the fort, caused, we were told, by a school of black monkeys who made their appearance every evening at the same place. Accompanied by Mr. Miller we procured a sampan, and paddled across the river. The crashing twigs and waving branches readily guided us to the game, and our boat was permitted to approach without difficulty. The monkeys seemed to be of a large size, very black and very shaggy. At the first fire two big fellows, who were apparently disputing the possession of a very apathetic-looking individual whom we presumed to be a female, fell to the ground with a crash. It now appeared, however, that the swamp was so deep and miry as to be impenetrable, a fact with which the boatmen were perfectly well acquainted before we started, so with much regret for the useless destruction of these unfortunate lovers, we continued our voyage towards the town. Captain Micheson was anxious to show us the remains of a strong rebel battery some distance up the river, but darkness came on before we had fairly

passed through the town, and we returned without seeing it.

Muka is inhabited by the Milanowe tribe, who have renounced most of the manners and customs of their Dyak ancestors, and adopted the costume and habits of Malay civilisation. In appearance they offer to the European eye no marked superiority over the other Sea Dyak tribes, but by all classes of natives they are honoured as the fairest and most beautiful of the Bornean races. Their houses at Muka are built on very lofty piles, close to the water's edge, on a branch of the main river, and the narrow stream is completely overshadowed by these aërial habitations. The river is the highway of the town, and we were much struck with its busy appearance. The water was thronged with sampans and floating timber; stalwart natives were paddling skilfully through the crush and welcomed us in passing with a cheerful cry; women were washing on the bank; children played and shouted in the houses overhead. The tall banana thrust out its broad satin leaves against the rainbow sky, and here and there a golden ray from the setting sun found a slender opening between the crowded roofs, and fell across the blackened water.

As we returned in the dusk the rhythm of many paddles in the distance proclaimed the approach of some pangeran from a visit up the river. His sampan soon overhauled us, and he courteously inquired who we were. On being informed that we

were strangers from England, he asked after the health of our Queen, and inquired in what relation we stood to her. Actuated by a proper sense of what was due to ourselves, we assured him with considerable solemnity that our connexion with our Sovereign was most intimate, both by birth and merit, and at once proposed to handicap the two sampans for a race.

The pangeran had from twelve to fifteen paddles, and we not more than eight or ten, and therefore we insisted that law should be allowed. This being arranged, the word was given, and off we set. I trust the boatmen enjoyed the sport as much as we did, who merely backed the general honour with loud applause and much encouragement, but I am not sure. The pace they put on was perfectly amazing, and we succeeded in holding our own in spite of the pangeran's superiority in numbers; but I fancy the screams of our crew, and the extraordinary noises devised by ourselves to animate their strength, led the enemy to believe that we should become dangerous if defeated.

That night we converted Mr. Miller's dining-room into a gigantic spider's web. He had no spare bed, so we suspended our mosquito curtains over sofas and arm-chairs in a manner of which each of us was justly proud. Every one of our curtains had four strings, and each string was attached to a different article of furniture; but Arthur boasted a patent sort of net which required two additional

cords to make it secure, and both must necessarily be fastened as nearly perpendicularly as possible. From the picture-nails, from the lamps, from the table-legs, from every projection to which a string could be attached, our web depended, and we shuddered to think of the result to the household arrangements of our unconscious host if any of us should take to somnambulism in the dark.

We did not visit any of the pangerans of Muka during the two days we stayed there, for the custom is rather discouraged among them unless notice be sent. The fact is, most of these stupid fellows have taken more wives than they can keep in order, and are horribly and reasonably jealous. One wealthy old chief has built a large wooden house with a tall steeple like an English church, in which he keeps fifteen wedded consorts. No wonder he disapproved of morning callers of the male sex.

The web was not erected again, for the following evening we re-embarked in our gig to return to the *Jolly*. After steering for several bright and particular stars, believing them attached to her masthead, we arrived safely on board, and at once got under weigh for Kuching. The coast all along this part of the island is very flat and wooded to the water's edge, but the lofty mountains of the interior are always visible. In the neighbourhood of Muka the saw-fish abounds, and occasionally it attacks the natives when bathing, or even in boats.

In the fort was preserved the proboscis of one which terribly mangled a fisherman some months ago. As in the case of alligators, the people never interfere with the monsters until some one is killed or mutilated, and then, upon a good old principle which all the world practises and no one approves, the whole male population rushes forth and slaughters a few with astonishing fury; it then subsides again into its normal state of merciful indifference. And indeed this conduct is reasonable enough; if a certain amount of time and labour be not sacrificed every year to the duty of keeping these pests within bounds—an idea utterly opposed to the principles of Oriental indolence—it seems more sensible to confine the vengeance to the guilty parties, and still permit the innocent to enjoy their hideous existence. During these periodical fits of fury, the slaughter is never intermitted till the man-eater has been identified by certain mystic peculiarities, and cut to pieces with much solemnity.

The weather was rough and squally all the voyage, and one windy, drizzling morning our little *Jolly* narrowly escaped an ignominious catastrophe. Just after dawn Captain Michèson and ourselves made our first appearance, to find the wind blowing smartly, the sky flat and sodden, and the sea yellow as jaundiced mud. As we stepped on the sloppy deck, a loud shout rose from the misty forward watch, and without further warning came the ominous sounds, "crash, scrunch"—accompanied

by staggering, shouting, and confusion. We rushed forward and found a huge tapong tree, quite eighteen feet in diameter and eighty feet long, banging and jarring against our side. Fortunately, we struck it at a very obtuse angle and were not injured, but had it been floating across our course we must infallibly have gone to the bottom.

The same day we saw a floating island; this phenomenon is not uncommon in tropical latitudes, and its principle of locomotion is found to be simple enough when properly investigated. Some giant tree upon a river bank is carried away by a sudden inundation and floats upright out to sea, supported by the mass of earth in the clasp of its wide-spread roots. When the soil melts away, the tree is subverted with a crash, the island disappears, and a naked log drifts to and fro upon the waves.

After a succession of squalls came an equally obnoxious calm, which held us motionless off the mouth of the Maritabas channel. As we wandered idly about our tiny quarter-deck, a sailor called out that a snake was swimming up to attack us. On examination we found a considerable number playing round the vessel or floating past us curled up in sleep. They were of the most brilliant and varied colours; one in especial displayed scales of amber, with scarlet spots along his sides. Our guns were at once ordered up, and we shot two beauties, but the gig had been hauled up on deck during the bad weather, and could not be lowered without half

an hour's labour. The sailors assured us that all these reptiles were much more dangerous than the land species; but we had so frequently found the natives in error about such matters as to place little reliance on their assertions. The largest of the snakes we saw on this occasion could not be more than six feet in length, but many of the water species are undoubtedly much larger.

On arrival at Kuching, we found H.M.S. *Rifleman* still at anchor in the river, and further up lay H.M.S. *Pantaloon*. The *Rifleman* was waiting to convey the Rajah to Singapore, the first stage of his voyage to England; the *Pantaloon* had come in for want of something better to do. As the date of our return was quite unknown, the little bungalow in which we formerly resided had been given up to the use of Capt. Reid, of the *Rifleman*, and his officers. Accordingly we removed our impedimenta to another bungalow, which Sir James assigned to us, formerly occupied by Capt. Rodway, whom we had found at Bintulu. It was designed to celebrate the twenty-second anniversary of the Rajah's accession to the Raj of Sarawak by great and unexampled festivities, and the invitations were issued to every white man in the country.

Already the preparations were going on bravely. Between Government-house and the little bungalow, an extensive building of "ataps" had been hastily erected, calculated to accommodate a numerous supper party, and when the auspicious

moment arrived on the evening of September 24, the interior decorations were of that class which may justly be characterized as dazzling. Flags, and flowers, and palm-leaves, and golden inscriptions, and Chinese lanterns, were displayed in wondrous profusion, with a result as of a hermit's verdant cell adorned "with ten thousand additional lamps." Except a few missionaries and out-station residents who could not leave their posts, all the rank and beauty of Sarawak assembled. Ladies were present to the number of eight, and the name of the gentlemen was legion. Under these favourable circumstances, the festive dance was sustained with the greatest perspiration; from the Rajah downwards, we waltzed, and polked, and quadrilled in our very best manner. But one gentleman, who whirled round and about in the black-tailed coat of Europe, was the delight of all beholders and the glory of the scene. Our band of two fiddlers came from the *Rifleman*, and propounded most excellent music. The performers, however, seemed quite unable to play in time, unless their legs were permitted to go through a sort of endless hornpipe upon the brick floor—a proceeding which had a highly indecorous appearance till its necessity was explained.

At half-past eleven we adjourned to supper under the palm branches and Chinese lanterns and inscriptions. Then the bishop arose to propose Sir James Brooke's health and prosperity, and Sir James responded. I am not about to give an analysis of his

speech; eloquence is not a very uncommon gift, and words are nothing; but let Englishmen look towards these islands, and see how glorious his *deeds* have been. From a population decimated by continual and merciless war, his subjects have become peaceful, orderly, and industrious; the savage Lanun pirates have been confined to their own seas; trade has settled in every river; law is justly administered to every class. The name of the Rajah of Sarawak is respected far beyond his little kingdom, and independent sovereigns appeal to his judgment and arbitration.

The supper passed off in a manner worthy of the occasion—with drawbacks of course; the rockets resolutely refused to go off, as was audibly announced by Capt. Reid's coxswain; and the Tuan Resident's bear spilt all the punch, which had been brewed with the strictest care in a bathing jar about four feet in height and three in diameter. When the three powers existing in Sarawak—the State, the Church, and the Borneo Company—had delivered a speech apiece, dancing recommenced, and, after the departure of the ladies, was continued in the shape of hornpipes until an uncertain hour of the morning.

Next day the Malay chiefs were assembled in the Court House, and we accompanied the Rajah thither. The building was crammed with ugly little yellow fellows arrayed in their gayest jackets, gold-worked sarongs, and embroidered trousers.

The speech delivered by the Rajah was heard with the greatest attention, and it was interesting to observe how readily, and with what a flow of sensible words, the native chiefs responded to his address. Two days afterwards the *Rifleman* received her passenger and steamed down the river, enveloped in the smoke of her salute. Sir James Brooke, however, had made a promise to his subjects to return within two years.

A few days after his departure my brother and I determined to reside for a short time at the mouth of the river. The mountain of Santubong, on which we took up our abode, stands at the entrance of the Western channel to Sarawak, and has been selected as a sanatorium, being, in fact, the only high ground at present accessible to ladies and invalids. Mr. Crookshank, the Resident of Kuching, has built a house at its foot, and the Bishop of Labuan formerly possessed a sort of rustic abode hard by, but the latter was completely overthrown by a hurricane, and at the time of our visit lay a shapeless heap upon the beach. The mountain culminates in a sharp peak wooded to the summit, and it towers over any vessel entering the river, a very pyramid of brilliant green chequered with "scars" of red-grey rock. At its foot, half hidden by cocoanut groves, lies a straggling village, inhabited by fishermen and very small traders.

Mr. Crookshank kindly gave us permission to take up our quarters at his house, and we found our way

thither immediately on arrival. As soon as we were comfortably settled we made inquiries for a boat and crew to visit some of the neighbouring islands, and Ali Kasut, our guide, interpreter, and friend, soon procured us a large sampan suitable for the purpose. We had brought our crew with us from Sarawak, and one morning we hoisted sail for a trial cruise as far as Satang, which lies about twelve miles from the mainland. Our little craft was perfectly new, and went through the water admirably; the morning was delicious, the sea was smooth, and the heat not too oppressive. Arthur and I lay under the "Kajang" or matted roof in the centre, our boatmen droned out nasal songs in the bows, and the trusty Ali squatted behind, steering our course with unerring paddle. After two hours' run, during which the increasing heat compelled us successively to remove the greater part of our apparel, we reached the island, a woody hill surrounded by a belt of cocoa-nuts planted by the Tuan Mudah. The trees were thriving admirably, and did not show the ragged aspect which the crown of this palm usually presents. The cocoa-nut tree indeed, when healthy, is very graceful, though it cannot be compared in beauty with some others of its tribe, but whenever cattle are kept in its neighbourhood, a large beetle makes its appearance in great multitudes, which instantly attack the leaves. This peculiar companionship of cattle and beetles is not peculiar to Sarawak; a valuable

plantation in the island of Labuan was nearly ruined by the ravages of the insect, introduced by a few cattle turned out to graze among the trees. Satang is also a favourite resort of turtles. They come up from the sea about midnight in great numbers, dig a deep hole in the loose sand with their broad fin-like feet, and deposit therein a quantity of round soft eggs, over which they carelessly throw the earth again. The whole operation, digging, laying, and refilling, generally occupies the maternal turtles all the night, and in the grey dawn they may be seen scrambling over the beach at a pace which must be termed rapid when their huge bulk and shapeless paws are considered. As soon as they have all disappeared in the sea, the keepers, who have been watching their movements with the greatest caution, reopen the nests and place the eggs in pits prepared for the purpose, where they remain cold and unhatched till despatched to the mainland for sale. At the time of our visit there were several thousands stored in the cellars, and every morning more holes were rifled, and the stock increased. These turtles, however, are not the delicate species which we value in England; fat they do not possess, neither calipash nor calipee, and their flesh is like very tough beef. The eggs, in fact, are their only valuable property, and a little of habit is required to relish even these. In appearance they are round and white, with a thin soft skin very like kid leather in consistency; the

yolk has a peculiar sand-like flavour, which is found exceedingly pleasant after a time, though at first rather disagreeable. The eggs are usually eaten with curry, and most Europeans become very fond of them.

The keepers at Satang, who occupied a droll little cottage heaped up with cocoa-nuts inside, outside, and around, seemed to be overwhelmed with business. A native vessel was lying off the island to be laden with a cargo of fruit for Bintulu; the turtles increased in number every day, and constant watching was indispensable; already the beach was honeycombed with their holes, and inlaid with the print of their scrambling fins. Ten thousand cocoa-nuts remained to be gathered, as we were told, and, with each day, the weather became wetter and wetter, and more and more windy. Of this fact, indeed, we were shortly to have a proof.

The Tuan Mudah had formerly a great quantity of wild goats on this island, but their ravages on the young trees were so constant, that necessity compelled their extermination. His keepers now possess two tame deer as pets, one of which has an amusing peculiarity; he will not bear a woman on the island. Should one appear, he attacks her with astonishing fury, and drives her into the sea with her dress in tatters from the goring of his sharp horns. The natives say he cannot be deceived by a man dressed in woman's clothes, or a woman in

sarong and jacket, but distinguishes the sex at a glance.

After breakfasting on the island, we prepared to return, but the sky looked so black to the eastward as to make us hesitate. Trusting, however, to the wisdom of Ali Kasut, which decided that we could easily run across before the squall broke, we embarked in the sampan, and hoisted sail. When about half way to shore the squall came down, just at the moment when we were unshipping the mast as a measure of precaution. Instantly the wind twisted it from our hands and carried it overboard, whither one of our servants very narrowly escaped accompanying it. The ratans which fastened our "kajangs" were unfortunately loose, and the mats were whisked through the air into Ali's face as he sat behind steering our course. In this extremity, rifles and books and flasks were slipped under the mattresses spread over the boards of the boat, to keep dry in the deluge of rain which now began to pour down. The waves rose in a moment, a mist surrounded us so dense that we could not see a boat's length ahead; the crew squatted in the bows, silent, drenched, and helpless, while the trusty Ali, assisted by Arthur's servant, still kept the head of our sampan to the waves, and we were never quite pooped. One "kajang" I had caught as it flew past, which we set upright in the bows, and the boat drove before the wind at a terrible pace. Rocks were known to exist along

the shore, and as we swept closer in, this new source of alarm was added. Everyone shouted at once, but nobody could hear a sound save the howl of the squall and the bursting of the waves; we had all stripped for a swim, but in the dense mist and spray, there were no means of judging the direction of the land. Each one kept his mouth open like a maniac and was evidently giving vent to valuable advice, could it only have been heard and followed, but suddenly, to the amazement of all, landmarks were recognised in the obscurity, and behold! we were driving before the wind up our own river. Under the lee of a huge rock Ali beached the sampan, and once more we stepped on land, having returned considerably quicker than we went. The experienced Ali himself admitted to us that he had not anticipated the superintendence of our affairs again, and regarded our return as a striking instance of the power of fate.

The next evening we found our way to the extensive sawmills of the Borneo Company, on the bank of a small stream about a mile from the house. Our game-bag was full of sandpipers when we left the beach to turn up a narrow path into the jungle. Birds are rare in tropical forests, but to our astonishment we found the trees here alive with doves and pigeons of varied plumage. We subsequently ascertained that every evening a flock of these birds makes its appearance, but seldom in such numbers as on this occasion. The pigeons

were twice the size of the ordinary European species, and some of the doves were coloured like a rainbow —pink heads, blue breasts, and wings of black and yellow. But the kind most numerously represented was that small pinkish-bluish bird which every Nile traveller has grown so sick of, and which I have found in every part of tropical Asia and Africa that I have visited.

But how can I describe the varied beauty of the jungle through which we passed? All tints, all forms, all grace of vegetation lay carelessly around, twisted into an inextricable mass, through which a path was cut with our swords. The very scarcity of flowers was in keeping with the scene, and such rare blossom as ventured here and there to show itself in this green twilight of giant trees, was pale and tender in hue. And over all was a great silence. For, when the report of our guns had frightened the pigeons far away, not a sound could be heard save the insect-buzz more stilly than silence itself, or at long intervals the hoarse and distant cry of a jungle crow perched upon some leafless trunk. Lizards darted along the boughs in a flash of emerald light, the grass waved gently over the gliding track of the serpent, and anon, far up in the scarce-seen sky, a huge ostrich-bird sailed past with booming croak. No word of mine can give a conception of the glory of a tropic forest, nor the effect it must produce on the mind; it is the union of living beauty with the silence of death.

Also it has its little annoyances. Around Santubong the country is celebrated for the amazing quantity of leeches which lie on the damp ground in wait to fasten on the legs of an unwary traveller. Our trousers were tied round the ankles, and we were barefoot—by far the coolest and most comfortable mode of walking, when the feet have become hardened, and the distance is not great—but the cunning pertinacity of the monsters succeeded in overcoming all difficulties, and when we reached the mills Arthur found two of them clinging to his flesh, and I one. The beaten paths were tolerably safe, but a short excursion to the right or left always necessitated a blood-letting. To catch two leeches, however, on one's legs after a stroll through thick jungle is nothing; I once found sixteen on undressing for a bath in the millpond, and had reason to think myself fortunate in escaping so easily, for I had not fastened my trousers at the feet. Forty is not an uncommon number, and a stout gentleman of Kuching once discovered seventy sucking at his limbs—or so it is said. No pain or uneasiness whatever is felt by the sufferer at the time, nor indeed subsequently, so far as our experience goes, but many of the punctures bleed for hours afterwards, and the loss of strength must be very great. After a long walk also, the leeches found on the legs only give a rough average of the numbers which have actually fastened on the flesh, for, as they become satisfied, they drop off, and

bleeding wounds are always discovered, the slimy originators of which have disappeared.

We found Mr. Stevens, the superintendent of the sawmills, embarrassed by the difficulty usually attendant on Eastern enterprise—want of labour. His Chinese lumberers had been seized with a strange disease, of which the majority had died, and the Malays would not work with any regularity. They do not show so much disinclination towards felling timber as to most other forms of industry; but uninterrupted labour is repugnant to their ideas of freedom, and they do not seem to comprehend the pleasure of "keeping at it." We accompanied Mr. Stevens to the village in an endeavour to engage workmen, but with little success. Chinamen are the only labourers to be depended on, and the recent recognition of Sarawak by the English Government will, it is hoped, induce a considerable increase of immigration from China and Singapore, enabling both the public works and the operations of the Borneo Company to be conducted on a larger scale, and with greater regularity.

That there is some danger to be apprehended, however, from this commercial advantage the state of Singapore is a striking proof. That town has been inundated with Chinese to such an extent that the immigrants four times outnumber the native population, and these Celestials are a difficult and unruly people to govern. Constant vigilance is required on the part of the authorities, and several times

already the riots have reached the point of rebellion. Sarawak has already suffered from one insurrection of these grotesque ruffians, and the battles of the factions in the streets of Kuching were, until recently, a nightly scandal. Whithersoever Chinamen wander, they carry with them their absurd local jealousies, and the same factions which fight in the bazaars of Sarawak and Singapore are possibly contending at the same moment in the slums of San Francisco and the back alleys of Melbourne. In most countries it has been hitherto found impossible to check these ridiculous encounters; but Rajah Brooke has discovered that they can be entirely suppressed by a very simple method. All who can be captured by the police while engaged in these demonstrations are severely flogged, and the dread of this simple punishment has made Sarawak that happy land in which exists a considerable population of Chinamen, and yet can boast its streets tranquil by night and day. But a few years ago the scene which could be witnessed almost nightly in Kuching was disgracefully brutal. Two or three hundred powerful coolies would be engaged on either side, and the custom of storing firewood outside the house doors supplied the combatants with ready weapons. Though absolute loss of life was rare, terrible injuries and mutilations were certain to result to numbers.

On the following Sunday we breakfasted with Mr. Stevens, and subsequently took a walk with

him through a part of the forest where the age of the trees and the dry character of the situation had checked that growth of underwood which usually renders the jungle as impenetrable as a wall. Provided with our guns and bowie-knives—the former to secure a strange eagle with a white head and reddish plumage which had distantly haunted us for days, and the latter to dig up unknown plants—we entered the jungle clothing the mountain-side, and our walk was delightful. In that high ground the leeches troubled us not, nor the ants, and we were left to ramble in comfortable security. What struck us most in the prodigal array of nature's beauties before our eyes were the nepenthes, or monkey-cups, for which Santubong is unrivalled. To botanists so unscientific as ourselves these plants appeared to divide themselves into two very distinct classes: those which flowered on the ground, or on a tree-trunk, in a thick and level mass, like covered cups placed close to one another on a table, and those which flowered singly, hanging from the extremities of their own leaves. The former of these were the larger, but much the less striking in shape and colour. Nearly all, in fact, were of a uniform green. The latter class were more brilliant in their tints—purple and yellow predominating—but, on the whole, it must be admitted that these flowers, if flowers they are, are more curious than beautiful. Besides these two classes, there were others which displayed no leaves at all, but seemed

to spring spontaneously from the bough or trunk to which they clung. Some of the green cups might have held three quarters of a pint—a few perhaps more—but the liquid was so foul with dead insects, and all manner of vegetable filth, that the monkeys must have a very depraved taste if they preferred it to the fresh water never at a great distance in these forests. The largest of the coloured ones could not have contained more than half a pint.

The orchids were numerous as usual, but very few were in flower. In one spot we found in profusion a plant of that class bearing a little lemon-coloured blossom, very tender and delicate, which we had not encountered before; the specimens we secured of it were not recognised at Kuching; but we left the plants with others at Singapore on our return. The ferns were an important feature of the scene; they mostly had broad straight leaves, and they formed green collars round the trees, or stood out four or five feet from the trunk in a grand rosette.

But the animal life we met with was very rare and insignificant. A small squirrel or two—a snake of dull and shadowy colour, which instantly disappeared under a decaying log—a few large but ugly lizards, very different from the gay little fellows who dart to and fro on the sunny boughs in the young jungle—a lovely blue kingfisher, dashing across a black and rotting pool in which no fish

could surely live—a few strange and unprepossessing insects—that was all.

But occasionally we crossed a belt of damper ground, in which the undergrowth obtained a stronger support. There the great trees were stifled by the clasp of tall lianas, and the lithe ratan twined from trunk to trunk in its upward struggle. With many a needless bend and twist it pushed up towards the tiny blue patch that glimmered through the eternal leaves, and when the topmost twig was gained, it seized it in its thorny hands, and waved a slender head above the forest giants.* Beds of moss, the haunt of venomous little snakes and of great wood centipedes,† covered the ground, and through them rose the stems of reed canes, green, and yellow, and spotted, and vermilion. Bamboos studded the rivulet banks, and brilliant dragon-flies flitted over the water. Every tree was covered with parasites—every shrub stretched out a thorn to detain the passer-by.

Nor were the insect plagues, whose annoyances

* The ratan expends an immense amount of unnecessary energy in climbing to the tree-tops. If the branch it wishes to overtower be a hundred feet from the ground, the ratan will grow at least two hundred feet in the endeavour; and when cut down and stretched out, will be found that length.

† The wood centipedes, though cold, and slimy, and unpleasant looking, are not at all venomous. The species whose bite is so much dreaded generally prefer the neighbourhood of human habitations, and the place of all others they mostly fancy is the owner's bed, if he possess such a thing.

balance the too great beauty of tropical vegetation, wanting in these lovely scenes. The red tree ant, though not so numerous here as in the older and more open forests, were much more troublesome; for in these dense masses of foliage it was impossible to avoid contact with the branches along which regiments of these insects were hurrying, and the touch of a bough caused half a dozen to drop upon the traveller's clothes. With the malignant intelligence of their race, they lost no time in running over the linen until they reached the wrists or neck, into which they thrust their heads and bent themselves double to get a greater purchase. Mosquitoes were not so annoying, for they are not fond of forest life, but Santubong has too broad a beach to escape that greatest pest of all—the sand-fly. These tiny little wretches, so small in size as to be scarcely visible, and so venomous in character as to make their bite felt over the whole body, were in myriads.

It is a slight and transient comfort to reflect that a cool and deliberate revenge can always be secured on these horrid insects; for they are so voracious that no sudden movement on the victim's part affects their horrible operations, and the avenging finger may be slowly placed on their wicked little backs, and their villanous lives be crushed out of them before they will condescend to accept a warning. In a short visit we paid to Kuching while our head quarters remained at Santubong, our

boatman took a short cut through a bed of nipa palms, along a channel in which the air was LITERALLY alive with mosquitoes and sandflies, and our white trousers were blackened with them.

In our two visits to Santubong we passed nearly a month, shooting and cruising about among the islands. Being Englishmen, an evident necessity existed for us to climb the mountain, and this national duty we determined to perform in comfort and at leisure. Accordingly one afternoon we commenced the ascent, carrying with us all necessaries for a night camp. Santubong would be a glorious residence for any one desirous of studying the innumerable species of ants which infest the country, and in walking up the mountain-side we met with several kinds which we had not hitherto noticed. The most remarkable of these was a huge fellow as large as a fair-sized wasp, who fortunately seemed of an unsocial disposition and inclined to undertake his expeditions in solitude. His vast jaws were qualified to give no trifling pain to anyone interfering in his affairs. Another species built great earthen habitations about the roots and trunks of the taller trees; many of these structures were three feet high and five or six square. Numerous cells about nine inches or a foot long, in form like an inverted dome, were suspended from the main building, and in this manner, no doubt, was the whole nest originally constructed. The inhabitants were little red-brown fellows, but very few were to be seen in

the neighbourhood of their abode. Another larger kind hung great globular nests from the boughs, and this was the most pugnacious and troublesome of all. But the earth, and the trees, and, in the evening, the air itself, was alive with ants. The flying species, however, are quite harmless, though a great plague. They are, I believe, merely the female sex of the terrestrial kinds, temporarily provided with four broad wings to enable them to plant new colonies at a distance from the original settlement. These wings seem to be a perpetual embarrassment to them, of which they are anxious to be ridden; if any light article be left upon the table in such a manner that they can creep under it during the night, such as a pocket-book or cigar-case, dozens of wings will be found in the morning strewed about its neighbourhood. Having thus lost their encumbrance, the ants proceed to lay their eggs in some suitable spot, and found a new nest. The numbers in which they sometimes appear would seem almost incredible. The air is thick with them, lamps and candles are extinguished in a moment unless properly protected, and the best and only way for the traveller to avoid the swarms is to turn into his mosquito curtains at any hour and sleep till the morning cold has caused them to disappear.

In the jungle at the foot of the mountain numerous species of nepenthe or monkey cup flourish. They were all more curious than beautiful, though some showed quite a brilliant colouring.

We had scarcely credited the story told us in Kuching that we should find them capable of containing a quart of water, but we saw many that would hold considerably more than a pint. Orchids of course were innumerable; every tree and fallen log was fringed with them, but very few were in bloom, and those were mostly insignificant in size and colour.

Having ascended half the distance, we set our followers to build a house, which was erected and thatched with nipa leaves in about an hour. The flooring was rough, consisting in fact of long branches stripped of their leaves and twigs, and placed over a hollow in the ground; but we stretched ourselves very comfortably on this rude couch. Had we strewed dry leaves over the sticks, the awkward presence of some stray scorpion or centipede was almost a certainty; green leaves would have entailed ants and ticks, and other horrors. Therefore we lay on the rafters and were content. I spoilt a capital bowie knife in assisting to cut down trees for the walls, while the Malays' parangs were quite uninjured; we constantly found, indeed, that for such work native steel is superior to European.

We passed the night in a severe struggle with a family of large red ants, which seemed to fancy our quarters. Setting out fresh in the morning, we reached the summit without fatigue, and quite prepared to do justice to the landscape. But the view

before our eyes was merely singular, and truth forbids me to call it beautiful. Beneath us lay a vast plain of dull green, bounded by a steely ocean, and intersected in every direction by the meandering channels of broad rivers. There was nothing beautiful about it,—neither variety of tint nor picturesque elevation. Had not the trees above our heads framed the scene with a border of fluttering leaves, we could have believed that a map lay before us similar to those of wax in which the hills stand out in green relief and the rivers are coloured of a dead grey. Several ladies and nearly all the gentlemen of Sarawak had climbed this mountain, and, I suppose, had seen the extraordinary picture described, for we found numerous names cut on a fallen trunk overgrown with orchids and little withered monkey cups; considering ourselves bound by a Rule-Britannia sort of law to do likewise, we scored our initials on a conspicuous tree. After breakfast we commenced the descent, which was diversified by several snake hunts conducted with great vigour on both sides, though they never lasted more than one minute, in consequence of the instant disappearance of the game.

Santubong is not so celebrated for its snakes as Bidi, but in the matter of scorpions and centipedes it is perhaps unrivalled. Whenever I awoke in the morning, lying on my civilised mattress, stretched upon my orthodox bedstead, I always found two or three centipedes clinging to the mosquito curtains.

Our servants assured us that these were of a harmless species, and probably so they were, but regarded as bedfellows they seemed disagreeable. Two of the venomous kind, however, were cut to pieces as they strolled about our verandah in broad daylight, and upon another occasion I found myself handling an orchid, in the centre of which two little mottled scorpions were happily reposing.

When we had visited all the neighbourhood of Santubong in our sampan,—and been caught in a squall nearly every cruise,—we returned to Kuching to make preparations for a journey among the Sea Dyaks.

CHAPTER VII.

Chinese Suicide—Stoicism—Purchase of a "Mias"—Description—Great Fright—"Wa-wa" Ape—Musang—Palandok—Feathered Rat—Singular Horns—Piracy of Sea Dyaks—Present Tranquillity—Burial Ground—Malay Origin—Accident—Arab Reis—His Vessel—Sebooyoh—Sakarran—Seribas Dyaks—Sakarran Fort—Mr. Brereton's Bath—Visit to the Undups—A Watery Mission House—Sabooyong.

DURING the first night after our return to Kuching, the report of a gun fired in the bazaar excited some curiosity and alarm. In the morning Dr. Houghton, the medical officer of the Government, called upon us, and in answer to our inquiries, explained that a Chinese coolie, finding his money and his credit with the opium shops alike at an end, had loaded an old gun with some fragments of a broken bottle, and fired both barrels into his body. Finding, considerably to his astonishment no doubt, that life still remained, he stabbed himself repeatedly with a knife, severing the femoral artery, and inflicting numerous other wounds. He would finally have succeeded in destroying himself had not the neighbours, roused by the report of the gun in the stillness of night, interfered to prevent him. The doctor had called

on his way to the hospital, and I accepted an invitation to accompany him thither..

On reaching the building, we found our patient lying quietly on his back, coolly regarding the scene. He was a tall fellow, possessing the vast chest and powerful limbs usual among Chinese labourers, and he seemed to care nothing for the pain of his hurts. Dr. Houghton, anxious to ascertain the course of the broken glass, tapped his chest around the wound, tenderly indeed, but in a manner which must have caused exquisite suffering. He seemed perfectly indifferent, and I could not detect a wink or movement betraying pain. When the probe was introduced into the little purple hole in his brawny chest, he lay quietly, fixing his eyes upon my face, and himself unrolled the bandages around his right hand, the fingers of which were attached to the palm by skin alone. The poor fellow subsequently recovered, and, as a British subject, was sent off to Singapore. The Malays themselves seem singularly unconscious of pain, but they cannot equal the Chinese in this sublimity of stoicism.

In the afternoon a fortman came down to us from Sergeant Lee, inquiring whether we wished to purchase a young female mias (orang outan), which had just arrived from the interior. Thinking ourselves fortunate in the opportunity, we at once sent orders to him to secure her, and next day we paid a visit to the fort to examine our purchase. We

found her chained to a large box in the court-yard, in company with a fine bear, several turkeys, and a small alligator, which hissed and snapped at every intruder in a peculiarly malignant manner. Our mias was asleep in her box, and did not seem willing to turn out, so we left word that she should be taken down to the bungalow in the course of the afternoon, and, being in a hurry, went away without seeing her. When we reached home to dress for dinner, she had not yet arrived; but on our return from Government House we found a large chest lying in the verandah, and our servants assured us that she had arrived shortly after our departure, and was safely asleep therein. As soon as we had gone to bed they retired to their homes, for we slept alone in the bungalow. In the middle of the night I woke up, and lay for some time thinking of unconnected trifles, until my ears became gradually aroused to the fact that a succession of extraordinary noises was going on outside the house: shuffle—shuffle—bang—whir-r-r. So many unaccountable sounds, however, are always heard at night in the tropics that I paid no particular attention at first beyond drowsily wondering whether a family of wild-cats was visiting us from the jungle. Suddenly an idea flashed through my brain—"It's the mias, by Jove! and she's loose."

The most horrible tale I ever read—Edgar Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue," the perusal of which nearly caused me to be "ploughed" for matri-

culation at Oxford, years ago—rushed into my mind. I followed the horrid story step by step, and with a result easily foreseen—I put myself into a thorough fright. The uncertainty in which I was as to the form and size of the animal conduced to my greater terror. We had not seen our purchase as yet, and knew nothing of its strength or ferocity.

The night was as black as a night should be under such awful circumstances. I opened my curtains and looked out. A faint streak of light appeared between the folding doors opening from my room into the verandah, and I knew the wood had shrunk from the bolt and would not hold. "By heavens, the doors are opening!" It was no trick of imagination—the light streak widened slowly—slowly. I do not wish the worst enemy I shall ever have such moments as mine were then. The wall behind my bed was covered with swords and knives. I slipped out an arm to reach a weapon. Something hairy swept the back of my hand, and for a moment I felt sick with terror. Then I remembered the long scalps hanging from my parang ilang, and put out my arm again, keeping my eyes fixed upon the fissure between the doors. Nothing but swords—swords—when I would have given worlds to clutch the handle of the smallest bowie-knife. At length my fingers encountered the rough buckhorn, and I disengaged it from the wall with a "clang." The same moment the crevice of light began to close, and I recovered

my presence of mind, groped my way to the doors, and propped a chair against them to give warning, by its fall, of any new incursion. I then found my way into Arthur's room, which lay behind, and roused him from tranquil slumbers by the awful intelligence that the mias was playing old gooseberry in the verandah, if she had not already penetrated into the house. At first he seemed inclined to laugh heartily; but alarm is very infectious, and in a few minutes he was as much disposed to regard the matter seriously as myself. The noise was still to be heard, and seemed rather on the increase. We decided that further suspense was unbearable, and groped for our revolvers to attack the monster on her own domains. Accordingly, we threw the doors boldly open, and stepped out into the verandah. But the darkness was impenetrable, and, after a vain search, we returned. My room it was impossible to secure, in consequence of the lintels and framework being so much shrunken with heat, so we both turned in upon Arthur's mattress and dozed in a broken unquiet manner till morning.

With the first light we awoke, and went outside. The chest lay where it had been placed the previous evening, and sitting upright therein, with her droll head poking over the side, was our mias, firmly fastened round the neck with a stout rope! Under these circumstances the sounds heard were altogether inexplicable; but we subsequently ascertained that a former resident, finding his house

infested with rats, had obtained a musang to exterminate them. When this duty was performed the musang disappeared; but he would probably return to his old home on occasion, and thus we accounted for the noise. During his absence, however, a small boa took up his residence in the bungalow, and was living there during our occupancy. As we lay awake in the quietude of night his movements were distinctly to be heard overhead. The first warning of his approach was conveyed by the creak and rustle of the matting with which our rooms were ceilinged. This continued for two or three minutes; then a sharp thump was heard, a faint squeak, and all was over. Our imagination could easily conceive the details of the picture: the innocent rats playing about the floor—the long supple crawl of the snake through the darkness—his down-pressed head and purple-darting tongue—his gathering coil when within reach—the sudden unwinding, as his tail beat the mat in a deadly spring—and then the sickly moistening of the prey as he stretched himself silently to gorge.

But our mias, our dear old Lucrezia, well deserves a particular description. She was horribly ugly—so incredibly and delightfully hideous as to possess a charm far superior to mere beauty. She was the strongest, the gentlest, the most unamusing pet that ever man possessed. She did nothing, absolutely nothing; so indolent and indifferent was she that to look at her called up an intense excitement

in the bystander. When she made a movement, the droll deliberation of her proceedings choked us with laughter, and no human being could observe her in quiet moments without a severe side-ache. When we approached her with a piece of sugar-cane, she pouted her lips as if to kiss us, and when the cane was in her grasp, she laid herself on her back, and held it with all four hands at once, tearing off the rind with her teeth. I think she considered us good fellows, and liked us very well, but she was *fond* of being scratched, and *doted* on sugar-cane.

Borneo is the true home of the Mias, or as we call him, Orang Outang, "Man of the Woods." Two species exist, alike, I believe, in all points except size. Both kinds are common at Banting, but rare in other parts of the country; they are drawn thither no doubt by the extraordinary quantity of fruit trees. The animal is quite harmless, though stories are told by the Dyaks of youths and girls carried off into the jungle and retained by them in captivity; they say, indeed, that a monstrous progeny is borne by these prisoners, but as no specimens have ever been produced, we may be allowed to disbelieve the facts until authenticated. Lucrezia belonged to the smaller species, and was considered to be about two years old, and not quite half-grown. She was rather more than two feet high, her head was large and stomach immense; her arms reached very nearly to the ground, and her legs were ridiculously short and

slender. Her skin was bluish-black, sparsely covered by shaggy hair of a red colour, and five inches long. Her face was very smooth and soft, her nose short and nostrils wide, and her eyes little and deep set. In the struggle of her capture she had lost the sight of one of them, which added the only point wanting to her complete ugliness. She always preserved her upright attitude, and her movements were rare and very slow, showing none of the activity of the monkey. Her food was boiled rice, and she was fond of meat when cooked, especially chicken; in confinement very little fruit can be given to the mias with safety, though such is his sole food in a natural state. Neglect of this precaution caused the death of Lucrezia during our absence at Sakarran, when she was kept at the fort.

We never regretted the loss of a pet so much as that of our dear old mias. She was so strong, and yet so gentle, such a perpetual source of amusement, she caused so little trouble, and was so scrupulously cleanly. She regarded everything with an air of intelligence which made it impossible to avoid respecting her, but in my secret soul I am convinced she was perfectly stupid and understood nothing at all. We had intended to make arrangements with the captain of some swift merchant vessel to carry her to England in a loose box properly warmed, and for her sake I meditated the long voyage round the Cape, but alas! she died, and we have not even her skin as a memorial.

For a time we kept another ape as a pet, who was not at all funny. This was a young "Wa-wa," the most beautiful of the Bornean monkeys. In the early morning these little apes may be heard in great numbers among the woods round Kuching, uttering a quaint cry which exactly resembles the sound of water poured from a bottle. They are very gentle, easily tamed, and affectionate, but they are always delicate, and in confinement are never known to give vent to their peculiar call. Their fur of dark grey colour is very long and soft, their faces jet black, and they have large bright eyes. The size of the "wa-wa" is never considerable; the largest we saw was about a foot high when sitting down, but their arms are of a length very disproportioned to their bodies. Our little fellow soon died, though we turned him loose in a last endeavour to preserve his life.

Lucrezia and the "wa-wa" were the only monkeys ever kept by us as pets, but we attempted upon one occasion to tame a musang, which we obtained on the Rejang. Our efforts were utterly ineffectual, and the animal seemed to become fiercer every day. He was very graceful and pretty, having soft fur very like that of a tabby cat, but greyer, and with beautiful white and black bars about the neck. His eyes were singular in shape and position, showing no iris except the thinnest possible streak, which never enlarged, and they were set very prominently in his head. One of his feet had been

wounded by a bullet, and, finding that the poor brute was occupying his leisure moments in gnawing it off, we destroyed him.

Another animal also we attempted to tame without success. This was a palandok deer, which had been driven into the river at Bidi and preserved alive. The female was killed, and we carried her body to Kuching, and sent it to the Rajah's cook, who served it up for breakfast the next morning in delicious style. The male being quite uninjured we endeavoured to retain, but he hurt himself so seriously in frantic attempts to escape, that we were finally obliged to kill him. The palandok is the smallest of the antelopes; it is about the size of a hare, which animal it resembles in colour and some other respects. Its eyes are singularly large and beautiful, more so, I think, than those of the gazelle. Its ears are long and broad, with black tips, and its tiny hoofs are the prettiest imaginable. All attempts, however, to make a pet of the palandok have, I believe, hitherto failed, and in the few instances in which some slight progress seemed to be made, the animal has died in a very few weeks. The experiment of shutting a pair in an inclosed paddock has been tried, but the longest period of their existence, even in such comparative freedom, was three months, and it appears cruel to make further efforts.

The most extraordinary animal we saw in Sarawak had been caught a few months before our arrival, in the little bungalow below Government

House, and had been rudely stuffed by a native artist. It resembled a rather diminutive rat in every respect, except the tail; this appendage was so like a feather, that the closest examination only confirms the justice of its Malay title, "feathered rat." The natives had some knowledge of the animal, but they asserted that it was exceedingly rare, and only two have been seen since the Rajah's arrival. One of them has already been offered to the examination of English Zoologists, and by this time the other is in their hands. The tail is long and curls like a plume over the back; the vertebræ take the appearance of the solid substance running up the middle of a feather; and light plumes branch off on either side. It is a most singular animal, and the peculiarity of its caudal appendage well deserves a minute scrutiny.

According to the testimony of several Eastern sportsmen, we ourselves obtained a pair of horns belonging to some species of antelope at present unrecognised. Unfortunately, the animal was taken in a Dyak trap,* and though the horns and a great

The Dyaks' traps are very successful, but dangerous to all travellers. A young tree is bent by main force into a bow, and the arrow is represented by a stout spear placed horizontally about three feet from the ground. When the catch—which is in the track—is touched, the spear is thrust forward with immense force, and any passing object is instantly and hopelessly transfixed, unless it be so low as to allow the passage of the spear over its head. The pig-spears, which are set nearer the ground, transfix a man's legs; the deer-spears thrust him

part of the skin were brought to us—the latter has been lost since our arrival in England—the body of the animal had already been cut up. The Dyaks presented the horns to us as those of a "kijong," and in the momentary glance we gave them, we did not notice their great dissimilarity. Subsequently, we observed points of radical difference, but the opportunity of examining the bones was then lost. In the first place, the forehead measures nearly twice that of a full-grown kijong in width; secondly, the horns are quite straight from root to point; thirdly, though the skin and hair cover half the length of the horns, as in the kijong, there is no protruding rim where the junction of horn and skin takes place, neither is there any sign of a brow antler, which is invariable in the other animal. The large portion of skin which was preserved for us seemed to resemble that of the kijong in every respect; nevertheless we regret its loss.

We had determined that our next expedition should be in the direction of Sakarran, where the Tuan Mudah, who, in the Rajah's absence, had charge of the country, was at present staying. Sakarran, which is his own proper residence, is

through about the thighs or waist. But accidents are not so common from this source as might be expected. Certain signs and marks in the brushwood, on either side the spear, nearly always warn the sharpsighted Dyak of his danger; and he enters the bush, and so gets round the spear, or searches for the catch, over which he carefully strides. Carelessness, however, will sometimes cause most horrible accidents.

perhaps the most important of the out-stations, both from the numbers of the population, and from their warlike character. The great tribes of Sakarran and Seribas have never been more than nominally* subject to the Malays of Kuching or Bruni, and Sir James Brooke is the first master whom they have really obeyed. Every year a cloud of murderous pirates issued from their rivers and swept the adjacent coasts. No man was safe by reason of his poverty or insignificance, for human heads were the booty sought by these rovers, and not wealth alone. Villages were attacked in the dead of night, and every adult cut off; the women and grown girls were frequently slaughtered with the men, and children alone were preserved to be the slaves of the conqueror. Never was warfare so terrible as this; head-hunting, a fashion of comparatively modern growth, became a mania which spread like a horrible disease over the whole land. No longer were the trophies regarded as proofs of individual valour; they became the indiscriminate property of the clan, and were valued for their number alone. Murder lurked in the jungle and on the river; the aged of the people were no longer safe among their own kindred, and corpses were secretly disinterred to increase the grisly store. Superstition soon added its ready impulse to the general movement. The aged warrior could not

* Nevertheless, they paid a certain irregular tribute. *Vide* the account of Seribas—*infra*, Chapter XI.

rest in his grave till his relatives had taken a head in his name; the maiden disdained the weak-hearted suitor whose hand was not yet stained with some cowardly murder.

Bitterly did the Malay pangerans of Kuching regret the folly which had disseminated this phrensy. They themselves had fostered the bloodthirsty superstition in furtherance of their political ends; but it had grown beyond their control, and the country was one red field of battle and murder. Pretexts for war were neither sought nor expected; the possession of a human head, no matter how obtained, was the sole happiness coveted throughout the land.

Such was the state of this territory when the Sultan of Bruni, in utter despair, ceded it to Sir James Brooke. The object attempted in this book is to describe faithfully its state at the present time. We found peace everywhere, and everywhere prosperity. The instincts which have grown with the growth of the present generation cannot be destroyed in a day, but the Government is very strong, and determined to repress all outrages. Nearly all the more powerful native chiefs, men who, in their younger days, were infected with the mania, are now entirely disposed to support the Rajah in his endeavours, and their influence over their warriors is very great. The Government, in its gradual steps towards the extinction of the practice, has striven with success to recall the feeling of personal

glory which originally led to the preservation of an enemy's head, and to make the Dyak perceive that the skull of some poor wanderer pierced from behind a tree by the deadly arrow of the sumpit, is a mark of the murderer's infamy as lasting as the honour of the trophy when captured in fair and open fight.

And indeed the heads thus loyally collected by the Sea Dyaks should be sufficient to preserve their reputation. They are an enterprising and fearless race, and the prosecution of their hereditary feuds would at all times have ensured a yearly increase gained in equal combat. The powerful tribe of the Kyans in the interior, the Undups in their midst, and the warlike people of Banting on the Batang Lupah, had ever been the foes of the Sakarran and Seribas, who were continually engaged in attack upon these enemies, or in the repulse of their incursions. All these feuds are now terminated, and it is surprising to observe with how much indifference men will meet, who, fifteen years ago, were engaged in a life and death struggle which had lasted for generations. The Undups, who were driven from the country with terrible slaughter, have returned, and are dwelling securely in the midst of their former enemies, and the warriors of the tribes will carelessly recount their victories surrounded by the vanquished party.

We embarked for Sakarran in our little sampan, and towards evening reached the village of Moritabas,

at the mouth of the Eastern channel of the Sarawak river. A squall was brewing seawards, so we determined to attempt no further progress that night, and accordingly put to shore. In rambling along the beach after snipe, we came upon a Malay burial-ground, the first we had met with, but it much resembled the Mahomedan graveyards of Cairo and Constantinople. Some of the turbaned monuments were handsomely carved, and the deep inscriptions upon them were gilt. The mark of Arab parentage is set upon most Malay customs; many of their words and nearly all their letters are taken from that country, and continual communication is kept up with it by the crowd of Hadjis who yearly undergo all sorts of perils and hardships in the performance of the sacred journey.

The Malay language has, like the English, a great readiness to adopt useful words from any foreign source, and probably one half of its expressions are corrupted from the Arabic and Hindustani. Even from the English tongue they have borrowed a few words, some of them of a class quite social, which is more extraordinary. The Malay language is excessively simple; it has no regular moods, or tenses, or persons of the verb, no gender, nor, strictly speaking, case or number of the noun, and nearly all parts of speech, especially verbs, adjectives, and nouns, may be converted from one class to another by means of an arrangement of prefixes and adjuncts. In sound the language is soft and pleasing.

Dialects are as numerous as the offshoots of the nation, which, in prehistoric times, has overrun and colonized the whole South-East of Asia, and the Archipelago of the Southern Seas. All the various dialects, however, are, I believe, easily traceable to one stock, though the origin of the race and its earliest seat are matters of the greatest uncertainty. The features and form both of Malays and Dyaks are so intensely Tartar-like in their character as at once to induce the supposition that both nations belong to that great family, and Gibbon informs us that Zenghis Khan's fleets circumnavigated Borneo, and conquered the peninsula and islands. On the return of the general commanding this expedition, however, the great Khan caused him to be put to death for failing to bring to his master the head of the Bornean sovereign—a neglect of duty which is easily credible if the country was as thickly covered with jungle at that time as it is at the present day.

But the difficulties which must be encountered in supporting this theory are considered by most of those learned in the matter to be insurmountable. That the Malays have been a wandering and unsettled race from the commencement their own favourite appellation for themselves will sufficiently prove; they rarely use the term "Orang Malayu," but prefer to be called "Orang Laüt," "Men of the Sea." It would seem natural, therefore, to seek

their original home in some maritime country, and not, according to the notion just now prevalent, in a confined district of the peninsula far inland. Leaving this difficult but interesting question to those so much better qualified to decide upon it than mere travellers like ourselves, I will proceed to my own proper duties of describing our experiences among this people, whether Tartar or autochthon.

We were awakened about midnight by a sudden uproar in the village. Thinking it might be caused by some one running "amok," we seized our revolvers and hurried up from the sampan in which we were sleeping, for a man when amok is shot down like a mad dog at the first opportunity, and humanity is best served in so doing. When we reached the houses, however, it appeared that an old man, wandering on his verandah in the dark, had fallen over the edge, a height of about ten feet. His family pressed us hard to do something for him, but all the doctors in Europe could not have saved his life; the poor fellow's back was broken, and he was dying in a state of insensibility. We told them to rub him with "Kayuh putih" oil, but it was merely to occupy their attention, and to avoid further entreaty. The scene was striking in the heated room—the old man snoring heavily before the fire, and the red light playing on the excited features of the neighbours crowding around.

The weather still seemed threatening when we arose in the morning, but we had just determined

to risk a passage in hugging the shore, when an Arab commanding a small vessel laden with cocoa-nuts, which, like ourselves, had taken refuge in the river the previous night, offered for a few dollars to take us as far as the mouth of the Batang Lupar. We agreed to his terms, and, after breakfast, embarked, leaving the sampan to follow as soon as possible.

We ascertained that this was the craft we had seen at Satang loading with cocoa-nuts and turtle eggs, and the Reis informed us that he was nearly blown on to the rocks in the squall that followed our departure from the island. He was an exceedingly handsome fellow, tall and upright, with a very fair complexion and a jetty beard. Ali Kasut told us his father was a rich shereef,* of Baugermasin, whence this young man had fled for the murder of a Dutchman, the seducer of his sister, who was beautiful as a Houri. The story was romantic, but not altogether improbable, for the Shereefs are proud of their sacred ancestry and bitterly detest the European. The Reis complained much of the poll-tax which Sir James Brooke has introduced, and indeed, the measure seemed generally unpopular, though apparently unavoidable. All the ports of Sarawak are absolutely free, and there are neither import nor export duties.

* The Shereefs are the Arab descendants of the Prophet. There are a considerable number in Borneo, and they are at the bottom of every disturbance and difficulty.

The vessel in which we found ourselves certainly merits a description, for, in her way, she was as original as anything we saw in the country. Her length was about thirty feet, and she was decked all over with strong "ataps"* in a hog-backed manner; that is, the ataps met down the centre at a considerable angle. By this arrangement, when the craft was on her beam-ends—the position she usually preferred in sailing—one side of the deck became horizontal. I hope this description is intelligible. If the reader will fancy himself afloat on the roof of a house he will perceive my meaning. She boasted no bulwarks, but at intervals a rib was prolonged about a foot above the deck, and to each of these posts a number of miscellaneous articles were attached and hung over the side. Above and below she was crammed with cocoa-nuts and cockroaches. No cabin did she possess; but a little hole, unconscious of ventilation, was reserved for the captain among the cargo. This healthful apartment was fitted up with feather-beds (!) and the mode of entry was upon hands and knees. When inside, the explorer was greeted by such swarms of unknown animals that he instantly proceeded to crawl out again, having satisfied himself that by no arrangement of the limbs and body

* An "atap" is a piece of thatch twisted up from the leaves of the nipa palm. It is about two feet long and a foot wide, and is used for the walls and roof of houses, and, as in this instance, for the decking of vessels.

known in Europe could a human being take the form requisite for lying down in that hole.

Two days we passed on the deck of this wonderful craft, protected from the fierce sun by kajangs, and on the evening of the second we reached the ruined village of Sebuyou, at the mouth of the Batang Lupar. Sebuyou had been formerly a thriving settlement, inhabited principally by emigrants from the Rejang and Sakarran rivers, but since peace has been restored to those districts the people of the town have gradually returned to their original homes, and we found their deserted houses falling to picturesque decay. We had some difficulty in discovering a hut still inhabited; but at length our servants found an old fisherman, who, with his sons, still clings to the old home. We passed the night in his house, and lounged about waiting for the arrival of our sampan all the next morning.

I entered into conversation with the old man upon the subject of matrimony, as he mended his boat upon the river bank. He told me that he had already been twice a widower, and that his second choice was not found on trial to be a success. It is noticeable, perhaps, that a man who has twice entered into the holy bonds rarely considers his second venture equal to his first. I asked the old fellow if he felt inclined to try his fortune a third time.

He said yes, he would like to risk it, but had no money.

"How much should you require?" I asked.

"Why you see, Tuan, I am old now, and I want a young wife; no girl would marry a grey-headed fellow like me, unless I could give a great deal of money for her."

"Get an old one then!"

"Ah! old women are no good" (*sic*).

"How much would the sort of girl you wish for cost?"

"Not under $100, perhaps $200."

"Why a houri ought not to cost £50. Do you require beauty as well as youth?"

"I want a wife very badly. Has Tuan a wife?"

No, Tuan hadn't a wife.

"Ah! I dare say Tuan would pay $1000 or $2000 for a wife in his country."

I observed that, in the long-run, matrimony generally cost a good deal more than that, and he sighed—

"Ah! perhaps it does," and turned to his nets again, thinking, no doubt, of the silken sarongs and "kain bandaras" he had given to the first young wife, who was so charming.

In the afternoon our sampan arrived, and we pushed on to Linga, a town half-way between Sakarran and the sea. About ten o'clock in the night we reached the fort, and found the *Venus* lying at anchor in mid-stream; the depth of water above would not allow her to proceed with safety, and the Tuan Mudah had prosecuted his further

voyage in a native boat. After a merry evening with Captain Lucas on board the gunboat, we continued our journey at dawn, and arrived off Sakarran Fort about three o'clock on the following morning. In running up the river under as much sail as our slender mast would carry, we found some difficulty in overtaking a little Dyak sampan, going before the wind under very primitive rig. Her crew, composed of one man and one small boy, had fixed four large leaves of the nipa palm crosswise in their boat, two in the bows, and two astern, which held the breeze capitally and answered all possible purposes.

Three o'clock in the morning is an untimeous hour to disturb any decently-conducted household, so we dozed quietly on the mattresses in our sampan until daylight. On inquiry we found that the Tuan Mudah was suffering from fever and ague—the curse of the tropics—but was somewhat cheered by the presence of his brother, Mr. Stuart Johnson, the assistant Resident of Seribas, the neighbouring district.

The Dyaks of Sakarran and Seribas are the most celebrated of all the tribes. They have ever maintained the closest alliance between themselves and an inveterate hostility to all the world besides. No means exist of calculating their numbers with any certainty. If the returns of the hearth-tax which the Government attempts to levy, were properly rendered, an average sufficiently correct might

be deduced; but the honesty of a people does not necessarily follow from their want of civilization—not at least in such a matter as taxation. It is believed that the Treasury is defrauded of one-third of its revenue by false returns of population; but greater strictness has lately been introduced, and when the reforms are completed, an estimate of the Dyak population may be anticipated which shall be sufficiently accurate. The highest calculation we heard of the fighting force which could be raised on an emergency by the allied tribes was 50,000 warriors, the lowest 30,000. But the Tuan Mudah is inclined to believe that both these estimates are below the mark, and no one is so well qualified to give an opinion as he.

The Seribas has much the smaller population of the two, but hers are the bravest and most enterprising warriors of the island. They have mostly adopted the Malayan costume, retaining, however, the armlets and earrings of the Dyak. On departure for a campaign, the young men always remove their ornaments and resume the simple chowat of their ancestors. The tribe is very wealthy; gold and silver necklaces are common with men and women, and the daughters of the chiefs wear golden waistbelts. In former days, when a family felt an inclination for new ornaments, the men would paddle cheerily down the river, and fine every Malay and Chinaman in the Campong of Seribas, returning quietly with their booty. Every house is full of

slaves, who are always kindly treated; having been captured as mere children, they have grown to look on the abode of their masters as their only home, and their parents are forgotten or remembered with contempt. As is the case with all people accustomed to command a subject population and ignorant of toil, the Seribas Dyaks have a proud manliness of carriage which is pleasant to observe, and their features have improved with their improved condition. They are, I think, the tallest and handsomest of the tribes. I would not have the reader infer from this that they are at all beautiful according to the European meaning; there are plenty of pretty girls among them, but the general characteristics are Tartarlike in the extreme. The expression it is which pleases, so frank, and happy, and fearless.

Their government was that of an independent aristocracy from the earliest times of their history till the coming of the Rajah. The viceroy of the Sultan of Bruni, resident at Kuching, claimed a nominal authority and jurisdiction over them, and the three Malay Datus of the Seribas district were supposed to keep them in control, and to check their piratical excursions. The Datus, however, preferred the easier and more profitable course of openly supporting these forays and countenancing them by their presence. In return, they were allowed a certain portion of the booty.

But, in peace and war, the Dyaks scouted the

idea of Malay sovereignty. Their own chiefs were their only masters, and it was even an exceptional case when one of these was raised to an acknowledged supremacy over the others. The Orang Kaja Pamantuah, who for so many years exercised an almost despotic authority, could lay no claim to his power except that of personal merit and the consent of his former equals; and the death of this chief at an advanced age was instantly followed by the disruption of his dominions. His youngest son, Si Hadji, succeeded to the larger share, his eldest son, Nannang, to another portion, and the second son, Si Logo, to another, while each more powerful chieftain resumed his original independence.

The Dyaks inhabiting the banks of the Sakarran river, who compose the bulk of this great confederacy, do not require so close a description as those of Seribas, whom they resemble in every respect, but in a minor degree. They are brave and warlike, though not so much so as their allies; they are wealthy and possess numerous slaves, but at various times they have owned a more complete sovereignty on the part of the Pangerans of Sarawak than the Seribas have ever admitted.

The mode of summoning the Dyaks to war is the despatch of a spear, which is forwarded from house to house with great rapidity. The message is greeted with joyful shouts and instantly answered. When the Tuan Mudah thus called upon the tribes in his district at the news of the Chinese insur-

rection, 8000 warriors responded to the first summons, and were assembled around his fort in forty-eight hours.

The town of Sakarran is situated at the junction of that river with the Batang Lupar. The country immediately around is flat, but here and there a solitary hill arises from the midst of the plain, and lofty mountains encircle it at a distance. The fort is a large and handsome building, surrounded by a formidable chevaux-de-frise, composed of ironwood stakes. At high tide the building is partially insulated by a broad moat, over which a drawbridge is thrown; but the Tuan Mudah has planted its banks and the neighbouring ground with flowers and shrubs, which remove the air of barrenness usual among the out-stations of Sarawak. The interior is pleasantly furnished and boasts a good library; the fortmen are numerous, and their quarters large and airy, and the number of guns and rifles stored in the armoury would equip a considerable force.

The bath-house is situated on the other side the moat about twenty yards from the main building. In order that the reader may form an idea of the lawlessness formerly prevalent in these districts, and of the difficulties which the government has overcome, I will mention a fact narrated to me by the Tuan Mudah himself. Whenever Mr. Brereton, the first Resident of the station, wished to indulge in the innocent refreshment of the bath, he was

compelled to march across the drawbridge, preceded and followed by two fortmen with loaded rifles, to deter any assassin who might be lurking in the neighbourhood for an opportunity to take his life. Under these circumstances we may be led to believe that Mr. Brereton did not venture upon the luxury more times in the day than was absolutely necessary. At present, I believe that a white man might travel from one end of the kingdom to the other in perfect safety, except, perhaps, among the wild Kyans of the interior or the migratory Pakatans. And this tranquillity has been obtained, not by the terror of sanguinary reprisals, or the slaughter of savage war, but by vigilance, kindness, and, above all, firmness.

But what result could be expected from the Malay system of government other than that which followed? Every clan was opposed to another. The Sea Dyaks were introduced to coerce the hill tribes, and the Kyans were tempted to invade the borders of the Sakarran. Head-hunting was encouraged to embitter their feuds; for the paltry plunder of their villages, the poor Land Dyaks, the only sure source of Malay revenue, were almost exterminated, the young of both sexes were carried into slavery, and Sir James Brooke found a population of two hundred males on the left branch of Sarawak river who were utterly destitute of women. These had every one been carried off in a foray some years before. No wonder the chiefs of the Sakarran

and Seribas are rich and powerful; they seized all the wealth of the country, and their lands were cultivated by captives taken from the people of the Hills. The government of the Malay Pangerans was reckless and oppressive almost beyond belief, and had not Sir James Brooke arrived, all the peaceful and industrious population must in a few years have perished from sheer misery.

After two days with the Tuan Mudah, our preparations were completed for a lengthened residence among the Dyaks. With some hesitation we selected a house of the Undups called Sabooyong, over which a Tuan named Bully presided, as the scene of our experiences. Among the Sea Dyaks, the chief of several clans is alone entitled to the dignity of an Orang Kaya, and the head of a subordinate house is termed Tuah, or old man, a title which he shares with the seniors of his own people. Sabooyong is celebrated for the excellence of its deer-grounds, a fact which decided our choice. We made large investments in glass beads and coarse Javanese tobacco, the presents most acceptable to the aborigines—tobacco for the men, and beads for the women; though the parts are frequently interchanged, and the men demand beads, while the women beg tobacco. The latter is not often used for smoking, though occasionally they make cigarettes like the Malays, but more usually it is wrapped in the siri leaf with penang, lime, and gambier, for chewing.

Accompanied by Mr. Stuart Johnson and a distinguished Malay sportsman named Abong Ain—followed by our boatmen, servants, and a number of Seribas fortmen in attendance on their Resident, we took to the water in three sampans. About a mile below the fort we quitted the main stream of the Batang Lupar, and turned up the Undup, one of its tributaries. Much rain had fallen the previous day and during the night, and a flood was the consequence; with some difficulty we made our way as far as the Baloo Mission, when we left the boats to force a passage as soon as the water should subside, and prepared to perform the remainder of our journey on foot. In the first place, however, it was obviously advisable to breakfast, and accordingly we waded up to our waists in water, along a broad canal to the padre's* front door. I wonder whether this navigable condition is normal in the avenue of the Baloo mission-house. We find all who have so far penetrated differ in opinion as to the *depth of water* alone; some say they swam all the way, others, as in our case, found only about one hundred yards of the route *quite* out of their depth. We did not think it delicate to put the question directly, but a great deal of lively curiosity is abroad upon this subject in Sarawak, and it ought to be cleared up. Inasmuch, however, as the padre expressed no surprise, though much con-

* Missionaries in Borneo are always called "Padres;" a reminiscence of the Portuguese conquests in the East.

sideration, when he saw us arrive in such dripping condition, the probability is that he was accustomed to the situation.

Before we reached the house, some of the fortmen of Seribas who had outstripped us, came back with a boat, in which we paddled to the Mission. We found it situated on the bank of a deep but narrow pond, whose blackened water did not seem likely to conduce to the health of the neighbourhood. Upon the opposite bank was a village of the Baloo Dyaks which we had not time to visit. The missionary assured us that he found no difficulty in persuading native parents to send their children to his school, and numbers of little naked urchins were playing about the house. The padre's servant was a Chinaman, educated to Christianity from childhood; and we were assured that his piety was sincere, and honesty incorruptible; a trait in a domestic which is valued throughout the East in proportion to its rarity; more especially, it is said, in boys educated by the mission schools.

As we sat at breakfast, a crowd of Dyaks came down to bathe at the pool, and both sexes conducted that operation with a decency which might advantageously be introduced at English watering places. When the meal was over, our host wished us good speed, and we swam cheerily across the pond.

Not the least singular features of travel in wild countries are the accidents which throw the wanderer into a momentary familiarity with persons

whom he will most likely never again encounter. We met Mr. C., the Padre of Baloo, in the centre of the jungle—we introduced ourselves—in twenty minutes we became friends—and in an hour and a half we left him in the forest, never, in all human probability, to behold his face again. But whether we again encounter these sudden friends of ours or not, they will never drop from our memory. Officers of the church, the government, and the Borneo Company, friends of months, or friends of an hour, be assured that your kindly hospitality and ready consideration will never be effaced from our minds so long as memory endures.

Our further road, after leaving Baloo, was over a "batang" path. It was not very well kept, but we had met with worse in our jungle experiences. Unfortunately, however, before we had traversed half the distance, the rain came down as from a sluice, wetting us through in a second, and rendering the "batangs" as slippery as ice. Mr. Stuart Johnson had appointed an old Seribas chief, who had been a great warrior in former days, to take care of us, and he performed the duty in a most engaging manner. This old chief had a most absurd affection for white men, and treated them with the greatest consideration. Nevertheless, he could not save us from some startling tumbles. The fact is, a man should be a scientific performer on the tight-rope to enable him to travel these roads in any comfort.

I think that was the longest march we ever encountered. At our request, Mr. Johnson did not await our slower progress, and he soon forged ahead. We passed through a small Dyak house, and the inhabitants, with their usual good-will, begged us to stay the night with them, but we held on doggedly in the manner of Excelsior, and after five hours' march arrived at our destination in the dusk. Soaked is not the word to express our condition; we were *diluted* with water, and utterly tired out.

We found Mr. Johnson sitting before the fire in the verandah, drinking gin and water, while his tobacco smoked by itself upon the hearth. Above him was a great bunch of smoke-dried heads, and a number of picturesque savages were crowded smilingly around, listening to the news, and delighted with the prospect of white visitors. We soon threw off our dripping clothes, and appareled ourselves in damp sarongs borrowed from Mr. Johnson's fortmen. Then we sat down in the midst to assist in the discussion—of gin and water,—and to wait impatiently for dinner.

I have no doubt we passed numberless objects of beauty and interest in our walk through the jungle, which would be well worthy of description; but the fact is I did not see them. A vague recollection remains of climbing hills, from which we looked over the level green plain of Sakarran, of crossing rivers and ravines upon a slender log, of thorny

ratans which intercepted our progress, and of belts of "campong," in which the walking was easy from the absence of all undergrowth; but my reminiscences are faint and shapeless, and the abiding impression in my mind is as of a deluge and a stumble.

CHAPTER VIII.

Snapdragon—Description of the House—Tuah Bully—His Son—Medicine Man—Gasing's Speech—Illuminated Forest—Wood Devils—Dyak Looms—Charms—Life of an Undup Dyak—Agriculture—Amusements—Religion—Treatment of Women—Duties of the Tuah—Preserved Head of a Mias—Kyan War and Character—Dyak Dogs—Blackened Teeth—Rhinoceros Hornbill—Food—Charms of Speed—of Bravery—Dyak Happiness.

ON the night of our arrival the darkness was too far advanced, and we were too tired to make any observation of our surroundings. The Dyaks were much too polite to interrupt us during dinner, which we took in the Tuah's chamber, but they assembled round the fire in the verandah outside, and awaited our return with impatience. As soon as we had taken our dignified station in the centre of the circle we were overwhelmed with questions concerning the prospects of the country, a matter in which the Sea Dyaks take the greatest interest. The Malays, on the contrary, seem for the most part indifferent about general affairs, and this is a point on which the Dyaks dilate much. They say, "These Malays are stupid fellows with all their knowledge; when the day's work is done each goes

to his mistress and sleeps the whole night through, instead of sitting with the old men and discussing the affairs of the country till dawn. White men are brave and wise, but Malays are stupid dogs, who think of nothing but women and dollars." Possibly, when these simple Dyaks have an acquaintance with the lower classes of white men, should such a day ever come, they may find that the difference between the Malay and the European is principally one of degree in most respects.

Mr. Johnson was asked every intention of the government, and when this subject was exhausted, strange inquiries were put about Europe and English habits. The chiefs frequently visit the various forts, where they are always courteously received, and, by the aid of a good memory, they generally retain a store of curious facts to be discussed with the "tuahs" over the midnight fire. I have rarely seen an exhibition more quietly funny than a Dyak chief at the dinner-table. He comes in with the dessert like other good children, for his performance with a knife and fork would be too striking altogether. He enters the room with a smiling but composed bow, and shakes hands with everyone present. Assuming an easy air, he takes his place in an arm-chair,—an object he never saw before in his life,—stretches his legs under the mahogany, and accepts a cigar and a glass of gin and water with well-bred composure. Provided the cheroot and the liquor be renewed about every five

minutes, he is as happy as is perhaps humanly possible. True, he probably does not speak a hundred words all the evening, and understands nothing whatever of our conversation; but what of that? All amusement is comparative, and the chief enjoys himself immensely. On going home he will retail to his people an account of the ways and habits of the "Tuan putih" as graphically as any other special correspondent; and then the Dyak always speaks the truth so far as his knowledge permits.

But the sight is more than droll; it is suggestive. The air of a gentleman may be amusing in a naked savage, but its presence causes us to ask whether this barbarian, unilluminated by a scintilla of religion, and devoid of the rudiments of refinement and civilization, is not, after all, a nobler being than the labouring man of Europe? The Dyak seems to feel confidence in the independence of his manhood, and perhaps it is because our poorer population has so little independent manhood to boast, that it is rude, brutal, and ungainly. The quietly watchful eyes which the Dyak chief turns upon every speaker, though the language employed be quite unknown to him, is so shrewdly intelligent, that one longs to dive into his mind and ascertain what his inmost thoughts can be.

Neither Arthur nor I understood the language of our hosts, and our part in the conversation was accordingly passive. We distributed tobacco and

gin with both hands, and the general impression seemed to be that we were good fellows, who were not, perhaps, to be held responsible for the deficiencies of their education. So we sat and smoked and chatted with Mr. Johnson, who translated to us the more notable drolleries. Before turning into our mosquito curtains, which were slung in the verandah by the central fireplace, we organized a grand snapdragon in one of the handsome bronze dishes which the Dyaks obtain from Bruni. It was about two feet in diameter and stood on a heavy pedestal, gracefully designed. The men and boys we made to stand at a distance, and women alone were permitted to approach the dish. We substituted two or three handfuls of cents for raisins, set the gin alight, and removed to a safe distance. In half a second the dish was overturned, and the blazing gin ran over the mats and the women's bare knees. Every one was burnt just sufficiently to make the laughter rather hysterical, but none were seriously hurt, and the success of the sport was incredible. After this we went to bed, leaving the old chiefs to discuss politics over the fire.

With the morning light we were enabled to remark our surroundings. The house of Sabooyong was situated upon a low hill; upon one side was a mass of thick jungle, upon the other the growth was younger. The framework of the house was of stout logs of bilian or some very hard wood, and both walls and roof were thatched with

"ataps." The piles on which the building stood had formerly been of considerable height, but generations of occupants had cast their refuse through the flooring, and the posts were now buried in earth nearly half their length; eight feet, however, still remained above the ground. Twenty-three families inhabited the building; it was in good preservation, and a capital specimen of Dyak architecture. I will endeavour to describe the three portions into which it was divided.

There were two entrances, one at each end of the house, and neither of them was provided with a door; the visitor climbed in by means of a notched log, and when standing in the doorway, a vista stretched before him through the house to the opposite entrance; upon one hand were the doors of the sleeping apartments, on the other lay the two verandahs. The inner of these, about fifteen or twenty feet broad, was covered in by the roof and ceilinged with mats; in fact this part of the building is called a verandah, merely for want of a name better expressing its peculiar features. It extended the whole length of the house, interrupted alone by the posts supporting the roof. In it were five rude fireplaces, composed of a few large flat stones, and over each was hung a bunch of blackened human heads. It was the usual lounging place of the tribe, and each family laid claim to as much of the space as lay opposite to its own chamber. The central hearth in front of the Tuah's

apartment was the place of council and free to all the inhabitants; it was frequented more especially by the old men and tried warriors. Along the further side the sloping roof descended to within three feet of the floor, and outside this lay the outer verandah, exposed to the scorching heat of the sun. This portion of the building was used merely for the disposal of rubbish, and as a drying place for rice or such purposes. It was about twenty feet broad, floored with rough beams, over which sticks and branches were loosely strewn. A slight and rotten railing encircled the outer edge, but this could not for a moment have sustained the weight of a child incautiously wandering, and it is strange that accidents from this cause are not more frequent. In such a case, the little fellow would be precipitated to the ground below, a fall which would inevitably break his neck, for the height on this side was very considerable. At one end of the outer verandah arose the skeleton framework of the pangaran house, in which the head-trophies belonging to the clan were formerly stored, councils were held, and the young men as yet unmarried were compelled to sleep. Everywhere, however, this custom is now falling into disuse. The original intent of the institution appears obvious. First, the bachelors were kept out of mischief, though this argument had perhaps little weight among the Sea Dyaks. Next, the proper defenders of the clan were always to be found in a body when

required, and thereby were not liable to be cut off singly. The women were unable to interfere in the warriors' councils; and lastly, an *esprit de corps* was created among the youths by the solemn position they held as guarding the trophies of ancestral valour. Under the peaceful government which the tribes now enjoy most of these precautions have become no longer necessary, and the bachelors doubtless soon expressed themselves opposed to a useless restraint upon their liberty.

Along the edge of the outer verandah waved a fringe of graceful foliage. The floating fronds of the penang palm, most exquisite in beauty, the silvery-green leaves of the banana, the dark verdure of the "lanset," rose above the shrubs and twisted lianas, which formed an impenetrable network of vegetation covering the hill-side. The whole building was about seventy yards in length.

The head Tuah of the house called himself Bully; one is at liberty to spell arbitrarily a name that never was written. He was a fine-looking fellow, not handsome, but boasting a face on which manliness and honesty seemed imprinted. In height he was probably not more than five feet six inches, but his vast chest and powerful limbs caused him to appear taller. In fancy I can still see the good old chief sitting by the fire dressed in a pair of Malay trousers, and regarding us with an air of quiet goodwill very pleasant to see. His family consisted of a wife, perhaps twenty-five years old,

but showing the remains* of considerable beauty; one grown son, a charming little daughter of about eight years, and a baby still in arms. Besides these, he possessed two female slaves of incredible ugliness; one of them had lost the sight of an eye, and as she squatted in front and stared us out of countenance, we felt inclined to regret that she had not lost both. The other was fat and flabby beyond conception. Had we not been told that these women were slaves it would have been impossible for us to discover their condition among the tribe, by any difference of habit or treatment, and in fact, though we knew there were others of the same class in the house, we were never able to identify them. Both with Malays and Dyaks slavery is so mild as to be rather preferable to freedom in a state of poverty.

Bully's son was "the glass of fashion" to all the house. We felt some curiosity as to the age of this youth, and asked his father, who informed us that his son was twenty-nine years old. Thinking this extraordinary, we inquired his own age, when he assured us, in all good faith, that he himself was thirty-two. His puzzled expression, when I pointed out that, under these circumstances, he

* Dyak beauty, at best a mere matter of grace and expression, soon passes. At two-and-twenty it has already begun to fade, and the subsequent decay is rapid. In compensation, however, it is quite a usual thing to see a grandmother of very advanced years suckling a baby.

must have been married and a father at the early age of three years, was very droll, and the difficulty caused him to instantly summon an extemporaneous council of oldsters to inquire into the question.

The young man did not dress in Malay trousers like his father, probably because one pair of such articles alone existed in the house; but his chowat was parti-coloured, and his ornaments numerous. He was about five feet four inches in height, very fair-complexioned, and his face, though Tartar-like in character, had a pleasant expression. From the elbow to the knuckles both his arms were covered with rings of brass, and above the joint were two broad armlets of snowy shell, which contrasted admirably with his yellow-brown skin. But the marvel and the glory of his array hung behind. To the end of his chowat was attached a long network of agate beads and bugles which jingled musically whenever he moved. Round his neck were strings of bright beads, and his knees were encircled by brazen wire. A profusion of dyed scalps fluttered from the parang by his side, and in walking before us through the sunny glades of the jungle, his brazen gauntlets flashing in the light, and his beads of agate tinkling behind, he presented the very ideal of a barbaric dandy.

Bully's apartment resembled the one I have already described at Grogo in its appointments; the plates in the little ratan baskets on the wall were more numerous, and, if possible, more gaudy in

colour; the ornaments hanging from the rafters were of greater value, and the weapons more serviceable, but the general characteristics of the scene were the same. Unlike those of other families, the Tuah's apartment had no square hole in the side wall, through which neighbours could converse and occasionally peep, but Bully we understood to be a most moral man, and the wives of the Sea Dyaks are always virtuous.

Next door to the Tuah lived the "manang" or medicine man of the house. He was a slow-moving, slow-speaking old fellow, boasting two tolerably good-looking daughters, who showed a natural aptitude for flirtation interesting in a psychological point of view. These girls, named respectively Sayu and Gilumbaï, were a great resource to us as a means of passing the long sultry hours during which it was impossible to wander abroad. Communication of ideas, however, was conducted with difficulty; we expressed our sentiments to one of our servants in Malay, which I believe he only half understood, and this interpreter translated our remarks into a Dyak idiom which I am tolerably confident the girls did not understand at all. However all parties were amused *et cela occupe*.

In the afternoon following our arrival, the indefatigable Abong Ain got up a deer-snaring party, and we sallied out with rifles and nets to beat a tract of old jungle at a little distance. On our way we passed over the ground cleared by the

clan for last season's harvest. No deer were found, but our stroll through the open forest was very pleasant owing to the complete absence of underwood. In the evening the rain fell in torrents, and shooting was out of the question.

Early the next morning, Mr. Stuart Johnson was compelled to leave us in order to bear his part in a great "Pachara" to be held at Sakarran Fort on the following day. Any meeting of the natives at which talking is the prominent feature is called a "pachara," as, for instance, a lawsuit when brought before the English Resident. In this case, the assembly rather took the form of a grand council in which the general course of events might be discussed. A more substantial object, however, was the distribution of booty taken in the late campaign against the Kyans. When this had been amicably arranged, an exceedingly powerful chief of the Sakarran, named Gasing, who was subsequently our very kind host and friend, arose to speak. Gasing is, and ever has been, a staunch supporter of Rajah Brooke and the peace of the rivers. He has, notwithstanding, shown great bravery and resolution upon several occasions, and his reputation as a fighting chief stands high; perhaps it is because he has discovered the vanity of war that he is so much inclined to peace. However this may be, Gasing made a speech at the "pachara," which was received with enthusiasm by the listening warriors. He said,

"I am an old man, and I have seen the changes that have befallen these rivers. So long, therefore, as the Rajah, and the Tuan Mudah, and their officers, shall rule over this country, I know that they will govern it wisely and well, and so long will I and my people live in peace and loyalty. But if the white men leave us, no Malay shall command the Dyaks of Sakarran. I will assemble my warriors as in the former days; we will restore the old alliances, and our hills shall be defended against all comers." There is probably no chief left in Borneo so powerful as Gasing, and no doubt he expressed the sentiments of nearly all the audience.

I quote this speech to show the proud feeling of independence which animates the Sea Dyaks. If such an event as the retirement of the Rajah should ever take place, and Gasing's words were carried out, as they probably would be, our poor friends at Sabooyong would fare ill. From time immemorial a bitter feud has existed between the Dyaks of the Undup and the great confederacy of Seribas and Sakarran. The latter found a small but warlike tribe planted in their very midst, always ready to make an incursion, which, if not very destructive, was at least harassing and ignominious. Had the Undups stood alone, they must soon have been exterminated, but an alliance was maintained by them with the Bantings of Linga as strict as that of Seribas and Sakarran. By this means an

opportune diversion could be always relied on in a case of serious danger. The great tribes, however, were completely masters of the water, and that to such an extent, as we were assured, that many of the Undups on their reinstatement by the Rajah in their own lands, were quite unskilled in the use of the paddle, an exercise in which the natives of the Archipelago seem to be proficient from their very birth. They conducted the jungle warfare with better success, but their lives were consumed in a long struggle with the power of the confederates. Every year the contest grew more bitter, till at length the tribes of Seribas and Sakarran organised an attack upon the Undups, which is still remembered as the "great Balla." Assisted by numerous Malays they utterly uprooted their enemy; many of the Undups were killed, some fled to Banting, but the greater part escaped into the Dutch territory. The survivors were recalled by the Rajah when these feuds were appeased, but most of their houses were burnt, the penang palms cut down, and it is only recently that they have again begun to live in comfort.

As soon as night set in we made our way to a shed which Abong Ain had caused to be built by the side of a salt spring to which the deer were accustomed nightly to resort. Before their usual time arrived, however, rain began to fall with increased violence, and Bully's son, accompanied by some other Dyaks, came to guide us back, as in

their opinion little sport was to be expected that night. As we returned through the jungle, the earth seemed literally ablaze with phosphoric light; the rotten vegetation gleamed brightly, strange insects moved along leaving a trail of white fire, and when one was crushed beneath the foot a flash ensued; the whole scene was incredibly striking. Groping along this strange forest, the conversation naturally turned upon "antus" or devils. All our companions except one Malay boatman expressed the greatest contempt for them, and for supernatural beings generally. Few of them, however, would probably have liked to return alone. In our rambles round the house we came upon two very remarkable objects lying in a secluded glade of the jungle. These were a male and female alligator, shaped of mud and bristling with sharp wooden spines, intended, as we supposed, to represent scales. They were the size of life, and their resting-place was encircled by a rough palisade on which were hung hats and baskets. Without wishing in any way to impugn the piety of the Dyaks, I may observe that all these offerings were quite worn out, and of no further use to the owner. On inquiry, we were told, with much laughter, that the figures were expected to roam about at night and devour the antus, malignantly destroying the produce of the paddy fields. With the exception of a very doubtful figure in a cavern at Bidi, these alli-

gators were the only evidence we could gain of any religious feeling whatever among the Dyaks.

In the morning Ali Kasut despatched some of our crew to Sabooyong with books and provisions, but he failed to send us our sketching materials. We passed the heat of the day in chat with Sayu and Gilumbaï, who afforded us continual amusement by their extraordinary observations upon things in general. A discussion arose between us as to the beauty and convenience of brown skins and black teeth. Sayu supported her opinion of the superiority of both by that mode of reasoning called the "argumentum ad hominem." She insisted that the teeth of white men in general, and myself in particular, were like those of a pig, and that our faces resembled the inside of a cocoa-nut. This was disconcerting, it must be admitted, but we trusted that her reference was to colour alone in both instances.

When not engaged in the paddy fields these girls occupied their time in working at the loom. We found it difficult to ascertain the mechanical principle of the machine used, for they only laughed when we asked questions, and either could not or would not understand; while the men assured us seriously that, in accordance with one of the fundamental laws of nature, it was impossible for a being of the male sex to comprehend matters so essentially feminine. The fabrics which the girls produced, and of which they seemed very proud, were quaint

and formal in pattern. The thread, which was dull in colour, was not of Dyak manufacture, but purchased from Chinese pedlars; and I suspect that the looms themselves were obtained from the Malays. The sarongs woven by the natives are considered even by Europeans to be far superior to the foreign goods imported. Cheapness is a great temptation, however, and the Dutch cottons from 50 cents. to $1 in price, naturally command a greater sale than the native manufactures at $2 to $5. The latter, however, will last both in colour and durability three or four times as long as the former.

We persuaded the medicine man, father of Sayu and her sister, to show us the charms with which he professed to cure disease and ensure prosperity to the household. With some hesitation the old man produced a wooden jar, which we had previously noticed for the peculiarity of its rude handles, but which we had believed to contain mere rubbish. On closer examination this opinion was fully confirmed, for the store of useless trumpery therein was not redeemed by the presence of a single article which by possibility could work either good or ill to any living thing. It seemed incredible that human beings, in possession of all their senses, though ignorant of book-learning, should believe, or allow others to persuade them, that any virtue or remedial power could exist in such ridiculous trash. Some teeth of alligators and honey bears, several boars' tusks,—and, among them, the finest

I ever saw, over eight inches in length and an inch square at the base—chips of deerhorn, tangles of coloured thread, claws of some animal which we could not identify, and a few odds and ends of European articles picked up in visiting the residencies—such are the charms to which these simple fellows trust for protection in health and recovery in sickness. For the credit, however, of universal common sense, it should be admitted that, although no expressions of absolute disbelief were made to us, neither the "manang" himself nor the natives around seemed to repose positive faith in the efficacy of their medicines, and all were anxious for the less mysterious remedies of European science. Nearly everyone claimed sympathy and relief for some vague but terrible malady, and we ourselves felt much tempted to practise our inexperienced theories upon a man who was suffering from a disgusting attack of "corrip." The poor fellow's body presented an appearance as if mouldy, and from head to foot his skin hung in rags. He felt no pain; and, in fact, this disease is far more disagreeable to observe than to experience. Perhaps it was as well that we withstood the desire to doctor the old man, for corrip in all its forms has hitherto defied the treatment of English science.

But the cases in which medicine could really be beneficial were not numerous, and such as we found were all apparently of fever. One little girl, about six years of age, was worn to a skeleton by the

attacks of this plague, and the expression of her pretty quivering features was most touching. The stock of quinine which we had brought was small, and we were in doubt whether it should be given in large quantities to a sufferer so young and so wasted by disease; but the look of patient hopelessness in the child's eyes made us long to relieve her agony, and we used the tonic largely. Before our departure from the house this boldness was rewarded by a cessation of the attacks to which she had been continually subject, and we gave her mother all the quinine remaining, with an injunction to use it when the fits returned again, a contingency which we were grieved to think was almost certain.

The monotonous life of an Undup Dyak passes somewhat in this wise day by day. He leaves his bed of mats and bark with the first light of morning, and lounges out into the verandah, chewing the inevitable penang, while the females of his household put away the mosquito curtains, light the fire, and boil the rice for breakfast. When the males have finished their meal, they leave the apartment to the women, for Dyak etiquette never allows the latter to eat at the same time as the men. The rice for dinner is then boiled in bamboos and packed in baskets, the children are looked after, the mats are taken from the floor, and crumbs and dust shaken through to the ground beneath, and then the women come forth ready for the labour of the fields.

A Dyak farm is not laid out in such a manner as to afford any new or valuable hints to the English agriculturist. The prolific vitality of tropical soil enables the aborigines to obtain a sufficiency of sustenance by a system of cultivation which may be called trivial. Towards the end of each dry season the clan selects a piece of jungle, usually the side of a hill or a small valley, and sets it on fire in several places. When the conflagration has burnt out—a termination which does not ensue until some wide stream or ravine crosses the course of the wind,—the charred brushwood is partially cleared away, and the larger trees and branches are dragged together to make a rude fence around the spot. Holes are then made in the ground, and without further preparation the seed rice is deposited therein. Having so far fulfilled the duty of providing for their future wants, the clan chews penang in happy *insouciance* until the grain begins to sprout. Then commences the hard work in keeping the earth clear of weeds, for the same fertility which enables this unscientific farmer to calculate with certainty on a fine harvest of rice, ensures also an interminable growth of weeds in equal luxuriance. Women and men labour with persevering industry; but, in hopes of profit, a family will frequently sow more ground than it has hands to manage, and the members are overworked in their endeavour to keep the whole in order. As soon as the harvest is secured, the surplus is sold to Chinese or Malay

pedlars, who travel from house to house for the purpose of buying. With the usual improvidence of savage life, however, a clan is very frequently tempted by the impulse of present gain to dispose even of that portion which should be retained for home consumption, and in a few weeks starvation compels the repurchase of their own rice. Although the Dyaks are nearly always obliged to run into debt for this supply, and although the interest demanded is incredibly exorbitant, yet complaints are seldom heard of any difficulty in the recovery of the amount, for these savages are honest as the day.

The Dyaks, at least on the Undup, do not appear to care much for athletic games or for amusements of any kind. We never saw them indulge in any warlike exercises* or dances, except at the great feasts held in honour of a marriage, or a death, or in recurring commemoration† of the latter event. Upon such occasions they have sports, and, as we were told, sometimes engage in such amusements as climbing a greasy pole or running with their feet tied together. Of cock-fighting they are fond,

* Though of so warlike a disposition, the Dyaks never practise the handling of the weapons in time of peace, nor are the youths trained in any way to war. They consider such exercises unlucky.

† It has been argued that such commemoration of an ancestor's death must show a belief in the immortality of the soul. Possibly it did so in its origin, but at present these feasts of the dead are only excuses for getting guests together and entertaining them.

but not to the absurd and ruinous extent formerly affected by the Malay pangarans of Sarawak, and of Bruni to the present day. We did not see more than a few of these birds in Dyak hands, but since they are usually kept, when not in training or exercise, closely wrapped in linen bands and hung on a nail in a dry place, they might easily escape our notice. Not having the fear of police magistrates and Humane Society prosecutions before our eyes, we assisted at one or two brief combats, evidently mere trial matches to assist the calculations of the "bookmakers" by testing each bird's pluck and skill. When this object was attained by a few minutes' struggle, held with much secresy in the verandah by the grey light of early morning, the cocks were picked up before any injury was inflicted and carefully swathed in their bandages, from the midst of which they soothed their ruffled feelings with an occasional crow of defiance.

Most of the Dyak tribes have no marriage ceremony at all, unless the simultaneous drunkenness of every male in the house may so be called. Among some Hill peoples rice and honey are eaten by the bride and bridegroom; more frequently they exchange bracelets; but the most common ceremony is the shaking of a fowl seven times over their heads. But whatever be the brief and allegorical rites performed, they only serve as a pretext for getting drunk. On the occasion of a marriage between folks in the middle rank of life the feast is

not usually prolonged more than twenty-four hours, but when the bride or bridegroom belong to wealthy or influential families the festivities last for several days, and sometimes for a whole week, at no inconsiderable expenditure of money, provisions, health, and liquor.

A majority of the Dyak people bury their dead, but not a few practise incremation; in either case the ceremonies are trivial and the feast or wake elaborate. The dead are, I believe, buried at full length, and their weapons, ornaments, and miscellaneous property are interred with them. In consequence of this custom probably few Dyak burial-places have escaped rifling by the sacrilegious Malays or Chinese, who appropriate the buried property, and are inclined to fancy they have performed a good work. These thefts are facilitated by the superstition of the Dyaks, which induces them to avoid the neighbourhood of their graveyards, except when they go in a crowd to place offerings of food upon the tombs of their deceased relatives; and even this custom is not universal.

In regard to their religion much cannot be said, for none exists. Some of them recognise an equivalent for the "Allah" of the Mussulmans in the word "Tufa" or "Tupa," but when we inquired who this being was, what his character, whether good or evil, how far he felt an interest in human affairs, or like questions, the answer was an indifferent expression of ignorance. Nor was it that

they failed to comprehend our interpreters; all the Dyaks are alike careless in regard to religion, to the Deity, and to Immortality; they believe that certain warriors of their own or another tribe have become "antus" or wood-devils after death, but whether this fate overtook them for good or evil actions, whether it is to be considered as a reward or a punishment, they neither know nor care. "Tufa" is a mere name with them, and few there are who even recognise its sound.

In fact, when the inquirer has attacked the question on every side, he finds that the existence of "antus" is the only point on which he can rest, and he shapes his interrogations accordingly. But the subject of "antus" is almost as slippery as that of "Tufa." Antus frighten men wandering in the forest, very likely eat them, but deponent has never heard of such a case;—an antu cannot be killed.* The Dyak knows not how he exists—what shape he is—personally is not a bit afraid of such things—never was—always laughed at people who talked of antus—never saw one, and doesn't believe they exist;—such are his answers when pressed with questions.

And yet the virtues which we are accustomed to call savage—perhaps because they are rarely

* This opinion does not seem universal, for Bully's wife pointed out to us a skull hanging in that house as that of an antu. Perhaps in the bustle of framing an excuse she forgot her orthodoxy.

practised in a refined community—these people possess in abundance. They are manly, hospitable, honest, kindly, and humane to a degree which well might shame ourselves. Surely the method of our missionaries is in fault, or their success would be greater among a population such as this. To restore the primitive system of gospel propagation, to baptize a whole tribe after a few hours' teaching, to inculcate the mysteries of our faith after a thousand converts had made an open and SIMULTANEOUS profession of Christianity, such is surely the true course to pursue. By this system the heathen world was first converted; why has it become obsolete now?

But with doctrine and dogma in hand, the missionary of the present day goes out on his work of elaborate conversion, determined to persuade a shrewd but ignorant savage of the force and value of a hundred inexplicable mysteries. When he has explained his duties and his object, he finds that the best men among the heathen stand aloof from him, unable to comprehend and too honest to simulate, while a few cunning hypocrites contemned by their fellows, and perhaps suspected by the missionary himself, affect a year or two of idle study, adopt the Christian faith, and, after baptism, openly throw themselves on the Mission for support. In nine cases out of ten, suspected and avoided by English lay residents, despised and hated by all classes of natives, a continual trouble to the missionary and his family, what wonder if such men

become a scandal to the faith instead of a support to it, and that their latter end is worse than their beginning?

But if a whole tribe were assembled together, baptized first and taught afterwards, if no covert bribery* were offered to encourage cenversion, if the heathen were not shocked by premature and spasmodic attacks upon their ancestral prejudices; in short, if the missionaries would but come back to that system of propagation employed by the Apostles themselves, most laymen of experience are assured that their success would be as real and solid as it is now slight and unsubstantial. Let the missionaries point out one tropical race *practising* and *understanding* the injunctions and tenets of our European faith as taught by them at present, and enjoying the sympathy and respect of the white men, other than missionaries, who dwell among them, and incredulity will be silenced.

Among the Undups the females are well treated. The share of work assigned to them in the farm is not unreasonable, and their influence is considerable in the family. With their return to the house in the evening, their domestic duties recommence, and these are the most severe portion of their labour. The men sit down by the fires in the

* The reader will not suspect me of accusing the missionaries of wanton bribery to attract converts. I refer to those advantages which the native Christians inevitably acquire under the present system.

verandah, chewing betel and gossiping over the little events of the day, while their unfortunate wives, fatigued with long hours passed in the sun and dripping with perspiration, winnow the rice for supper and for the meals of the following day. This is done by pounding the grain in large troughs, by means of long and heavy poles which are held perpendicularly. The women help each other in this arduous toil, and three of them are usually employed for half an hour at each trough. When the husk is thus separated, the grain is cleverly winnowed in large, shovel-shaped trays, and then boiled without delay. The spectacle of women and children panting and overcome by the fatigue of this terrible labour caused us at first to feel quite indignant, but as the sufferers did not seem in the least to pity themselves, or to understand the insinuations we made tending towards a domestic revolution, we soon became accustomed to the sight, and accepted it as right and proper under the régime of savage life. As soon as their supper is over, the women clear away the bronze dishes, feed the children, and are at length at liberty to squat in the dusky verandah and munch penang in peace.

The duties of the Orang Kaya are light enough: to settle all disputes among the families under his control, to entertain strangers, to command the fighting force in time of war, and to watch the general interests,—such are the claims upon his time

and intellect. Bully seemed to think that these duties were best performed by sitting still and staring at us in a good-natured manner; and I dare say he was quite right. There are several precedents in Europe for this line of conduct.

The dignity of Orang Kaya, or Tuah, or any title under which the government of a clan may be conducted, is hereditary, and Bully's son admitted to us, with modest pride, that he anticipated the succession to Sabooyong at his father's death, and intended to bear sway upon the same conservative system which we saw triumphantly successful in the parent's case. It will be easily credited, however, that the law of primogeniture is not very strictly observed among a people so warlike and restless as the Sea Dyaks. The succession is frequently diverted by reason of the youth or incapacity of the rightful heir, but it is usually preserved in the family of the late chief.

When the evening meal is concluded and the household cares dismissed, all the clan assemble to gossip in the inner verandah. The old men sit round the large fire in the midst, the head chief takes up a dignified position, the younger warriors sit cross-legged in the dusky background, and all prepare for the talk they so dearly love. The Tuahs relate wild stories of their youthful wars, and point upwards to the blackened heads among which the smoke is curling. They speak of the Rajah's accession, and how he was harassed by the

Sea Dyaks; how the chiefs of Seribas erected a stage on which to dry his head, and swore they would never make peace with Sarawak till that trophy was hung in their pangaran-house. Then they talk of the safety of the rivers under this government, of the increase of trade, and the general content. The younger men sit by in admiring silence, half envying the warlike deeds of their fathers, half agreeing in their content with the present security. But they, too, have their boast when they tell of the exploits of the Tuan Mudah, and the foreign wars in which they have followed that leader "baniak brani." And so the time wears on; one by one the speakers doze off upon the mats, until the fire burns low and the cold strikes their naked limbs; then they wake up, throw more wood upon the embers, and recommence the talk.

It will be seen that these ignorant fellows have not that reverence for early hours which has, we know, principally caused the eminence of every truly great man. Possibly the source of Dyak barbarism is to be found in this reckless indifference to domestic morality. For ourselves, we preserved those proprieties which have made our country what she is, and always turned into our mosquito curtains at eleven o'clock. But sleep in the tropics is disturbed,—at least it is so with us,—and a bed composed of ratan matting spread over loose sticks does not tend to tranquillize the rest of a civilized

being. But, at whatever hour we woke up, a few dusky figures were always interposed between us and the blaze, and their muttering voices faintly reached our ears. Half a dozen brawny fellows lay slumbering around whose faces looked fierce enough by the changing firelight, when the cheerful eyes were closed in sleep, and the kindly expression was gone from the mouth; but when one of them drowsily arose, brazen gauntlets jingling, and long earrings tinkling in the silence, his savage finery looked indescribably picturesque. The snowy armlets of shell, the glittering bracelets, the graceful "ribu" leaves in his hair, the earrings, the crimson chowat, the glossy yellow skin, presented a strangely striking picture as the warrior couched down under the hideous smoke-dried heads hanging from the roof—black, grinning, with half-open eyelids and parted jaws.

While we sat up, our part in these evening entertainments was principally convivial. Recalling our schoolboy science, we manufactured various fireworks for the general instruction, and for our particular amusement the Malays sang nasal ditties to the accompaniment of a fine set of Bruni gongs which Bully possessed. Certainly the performers required no pressing to exhibit their talents; a Malay is as vain as a French coryphée. In vain, however, we endeavoured to persuade the Dyaks to sing or play. They admitted a knowledge of music, both vocal and instrumental, but we never could

induce them to emit a note all the time we were in Sarawak. The probability is that they have merely borrowed from Malay science, which is even more loaded with mannerism and falsity than any other Asiatic music I ever heard.

At dawn the clan arises and pursues its labour as on the previous day.

But the above account represents the life of a Dyak during the harvest time alone. Between the seasons, the young men wander away into the jungle for weeks together; seeking gutta-percha, damar, edible birds' nests, and the hundred articles of trade which their forests supply. Sometimes the old instinct will even yet break out, and a head is taken by these wandering parties; but such offences, when discovered, as usually happens, are punished by a heavy fine upon the house of the aggressors, and the head is confiscated. In the course of years, the Tuan Mudah, in whose district these lawless attacks most frequently happen, has collected a quantity of forfeited heads, which are the envy of the neighbouring tribes. These trophies, preserved in the interest of peace and order, are stored in a house on the Sakarran river, which is carefully guarded by Malays. Not even the terror of punishment, nor the intense respect they entertain for the person of the Tuan Mudah, would probably be effectual in deterring the Dyaks from appropriating these heads, were not constant vigilance exercised in watching them. It should be borne in mind that

long ancestral custom, excited in later years to a ferocious mania, has led the Sea Dyaks to regard the possession of human heads, no matter how obtained, as the truest honour and most valuable wealth a tribe can acquire; and some generations must yet pass away before this feeling, so long encouraged by their rulers, can effectually be destroyed. The efforts of Sir James Brooke's government for its suppression have already achieved a success most surprising and agreeable, but his influence and that of his officers would be instantly uprooted were he hastily to proclaim a crusade against the practice of head-taking in open war.

But all experience shows that a great demand will usually produce frauds in the supply, and though the Dyaks may be ignorant of political economy, the principles of that mysterious science do not therefore cease to run their silent train. Among the heads suspended in little ratan baskets over the central fireplace at Sabooyong, we discovered the unmistakable skull of a mias. Arthur charged the natives with the deception, which they denied with much indignation. Seeing, however, that their profuse assurances did not in the least convince us against the testimony of our own eyes and anthropological knowledge, Bully's wife informed us in an awe-stricken tone that the head in question had appertained to a horrible devil which had attacked a valiant warrior in the jungle. After

a fight of several days' duration, the hero killed the monster and brought home its fearful head with much rejoicing. We accepted the explanation, and added several facts from our own stores of information, which will, I trust, make the story still more astonishing to the next English wanderer who may visit our hospitable friends. Such frauds as this are not rare, and the heads are so blackened and defaced by heat and smoke, that to distinguish at a casual glance between the skull of an animal and that of a human being is not very easy.

One feeling alone in former times was sufficiently developed in his nature to distract a Dyak from his insatiable search of heads; this was the passionate love he bore towards little children. Several times have the English residents seen a stalwart warrior dash, yelling, through a captured village, clasping in his arms a young child as tenderly as was possible, without relaxing his grasp of its father's gory head.

The Sea Dyaks never tatoo their bodies in any way; like the Malays, they consider that practice to be a sign of cowardice, and several Englishmen in Sarawak who have served at sea, and whose arms are covered with hearts and anchors and broad-arrows, submit to much friendly teasing from the natives in consequence. The Kyans, Pakatans, and Kennowits, alone in Borneo, practise tatooing, and these are the three aboriginal races least esteemed for bravery. Previous to the war just concluded

when we reached the country, the Kyans boasted a reputation for enterprise and ferocious courage which served them materially in their frequent and sanguinary descents on the Dyak territory, but the cowardice and incompetence they displayed when danger was imminent has destroyed for ever this honourable renown. For the first time, their country, universally deemed impregnable, was invaded, their houses burnt, their families killed or enslaved, but the Kyan warriors never fought when they could flee. The warlike Dyaks of Sakarran are ashamed to think that they ever dreaded a foe so dastardly. The losses of the Sarawak force in the expedition were considerable both in men and valuables. To penetrate the Kyan country it was necessary to ascend the rapids of the Rejang, which Dyak invaders had always found impassable, but the presence of Englishmen gave an impulse to the enterprise which overcame all obstacles. With a loss of thirty men drowned, half the boats, most of the stores, and nearly all the personal baggage, the rapids were forced, and the astonished Kyans, who had never dreamed of a necessity for defence, found the invaders at their very doors.

The loss of the Dyaks was about three hundred men in the whole war; that of the Kyans much greater, and we saw many captive children, especially among the people of Kennowit who are of kindred blood. These children contrasted badly with the Dyaks; their heads and stomachs were out

of all proportion; their limbs slender and joints large; their features ugly and unhealthy, and their whole appearance that of an inferior race. It must not be thought that ill-treatment or want of nourishment while in their captors' hands had caused these symptoms, for such conduct to a child would be impossible on the part of a Dyak, and we were assured that the adult Kyans killed in the field presented exactly the same characteristics.

The house at Sabooyong was crammed with dogs. All ages were represented in the crowd, from the toddling puppy in constant danger of slipping through the floor if his affectionate young tormentors had allowed him to remain on his uncertain little legs for two consecutive minutes, to the wary old tyke, grizzled and snappish, who dozed through the hours in a peaceful corner. The animals were small but exceedingly active; their coats were usually fern-colour, short and velvety, but some had long yellow hair. Their noses were as sharp as foxes', eyes bright, ears soft and mobile, and limbs clean. We never heard one bark, and, in fact, like all half-wild breeds, they had not the power of uttering such a sound, but when disturbed, they gave a querulous whine and snapped instantaneously. In the latter respect, the half-grown dogs were quite as disagreeable as the older animals. The children had discovered a game which we found very amusing. The fun of it consisted in evading the fierce snaps of the little prisoner without letting him escape,

and screams of shrill laughter, elicited by the excitement of this sport, resounded all day long through the house. The dogs were so exceedingly pretty that to see one pass by without seizing him was out of the question.

But besides their advantage as amusing pets for the children, these dogs, small though they be, are most useful and accomplished in hunting. I have already mentioned the sound which calls them to heel in the absence of a whistle, the trick of which Dyaks do not understand. This is a peculiar wailing hum, very melancholy to hear in the jungle, but casting its note to a great distance. The dogs hunt the ground most carefully, and there is no animal they will not readily attack except the "kijong." This is a sort of roebuck, carrying short curled horns, covered with hair over half their length. He is a fearless and pugnacious little fellow, and we attempted in vain to persuade the dogs to follow his slot when discovered. But common deer, wild boar, bear, or mias they will drive out readily. Without his dogs, a Dyak encountering a boar in these thick forests would be in a most unpleasant position, but when accompanied by his little pack, he spears the game in perfect security, knowing the heels of the boar to be effectually clogged. The dogs are trained never to attack the head of an animal, but to seize his hind legs, and by mere dead weight to prevent him from charging.

Had not our poor mias, Lucrezia, died in an untimeous manner, we had hoped to bring some of these delicate little beauties with us to England.

One question was asked of us again and again in the evening councils, and our invariable answer to it was evidently received with polite incredulity; "How do the Orang Dyak* exist in the Tuan's country if it be so cold?" In vain we assured them that there were no "Orang Dyak" in "negri Inggris;" they only remarked that "all white men said so." But there was another point on which our words were almost flatly refused credence; this was the absence of rice-fields in our country. *C'était trop fort.* In ice, and hail, and snow, and vapour, the Dyaks were willing to put blind faith, but a nation living without rice was absurdly impossible. Seeing that we had gone too far, we preserved our veracity by means of a small joke, and assured them that we had "paddy," lots of it, and according to some people even too much.

We made inquiries about the means employed for blackening the teeth, a custom which is universal in the far East. The old medicine man was finally persuaded to show us the process, and very curious it appeared. He produced from his stores a piece of dry wood of a kind called "Sinka;" this was set on fire and held over the blade of a parang, on which a few drops of water had been poured. As

* The Malays and Dyaks rarely pronounce the final k. Sarawak is pronounced Sarāwah—Dyak, Dyah, &c.

the stick blazed, a black sap oozed from it, and dropped upon the metal, where it mingled with the water, and in a few moments formed a pool of thick jetty liquid. With this the teeth are stained in childhood, and one application we were told, will suffice to preserve them black for ever, nor are there any means of removing the colour. The process seemed peculiar, because the wood from which exuded the sap appeared to be as dry as dust, and because the dye will not affect any substance except the teeth, not even bone or horn. This is the more singular since some of the Malays file the enamel carefully from their teeth before applying the "Sinka." Many, indeed, file them to a point as sharp as a needle, as do some of the Dyak tribes.

The mention of teeth naturally leads to the subject of food. In this matter it will easily be believed the Dyaks are not very particular. Rice is their principal article of diet, to which a sort of pickle is sometimes added; but when their traps or their hunting have been successful, they devour all living things, furry or feathered, except the rhinoceros hornbill. This bird is about two feet in length, dull in plumage, but provided with a huge and ungainly beak, from the curled horn on which its name of rhinoceros is derived. The large wing and tail feathers are black, crossed by a broad white band, and by both Malays and Dyaks they are considered to have great virtue. The bird is in a way

the symbol of war, and shields, parangs, and war-cloaks are decorated with its feathers; the curly horn upon its beak is scraped and polished and made into earrings.

Some few households in Sabooyong refused to eat venison in consequence of a family tradition that their individual ancestors are accustomed to take the form of deer after death. The excuse was respected by the other families who had reason to believe that their own progenitors preferred some other shape, or who did not trouble themselves with their fate. Scepticism is not confined to the creeds of civilization.

But the food of a Dyak is so essentially vegetable as to afford an example of Dr. Lamb's principles in practical efficiency. And certainly his disciples have occasion to glory in the success of their system by this test, for men more active and powerful than the Dyaks could not easily be found. When Ali Kasut sent provisions to us from the sampan, he failed to forward our sketch-books, of which we were much in need. Accordingly, I offered Bully's brother the present of a many-bladed clasp-knife, to go to the boat, and bring the drawing materials and some other necessaries which altogether made a good load. He started about two o'clock in the afternoon, and returned at sunset; having performed in that time a double journey over the distance which we had traversed only once in a march of five hours. The stories we heard in

Sarawak of Dyak strength and endurance seemed incredible until we actually lived among them and observed the evidences of it which every day presented. The stalwart little native thinks nothing of taking a heavy European on his back and carrying him a mile or two over the slippery "batangs;" and across bridges, too, where a stumble or the slightest ill-balance would hurl the pair into an abyss from which they would never emerge alive. And these feats are performed so easily, and with such simple boyish delight in a strength so superior to that of the clever and half-supernatural "Tuan putih."

But the Dyaks put great faith in certain charms supposed to increase their forces. A very powerful amulet of this class, warranted to ensure rapidity of progress through the thickest jungle, little short of steam power, was offered to us at the moderate price of $15. It appeared to be a small kijong horn very much deformed, but the owner, a Malay, asseverated that he himself, in the presence of numerous witnesses, had cut it from the head of a palandok antelope, and that its fellow antler was of solid brass. A palandok with horns has never yet been seen by a European, but such a case is not, I believe, considered absolutely impossible by the comparative anatomists, and native evidence of the phenomenon is very strong. Such testimony is of no great value, but in this case it seems more reliable, inasmuch as the Dyaks admit that the

horns are not seen in one specimen among a thousand. In the instance, however, of this charm, the antler, though singular in form, was too like that of a kijong much misshapen, to tempt our credulity at the price of £3 15s.; but we liberally offered the owner three times that money for its fellow of brass. He did not produce it, and without being uncharitable, the reason may perhaps be guessed.

Arguing upon theory alone, the man who wished to sell me this charm at a preposterous price must evidently have been a cheat, but I should not care flatly to charge him with knavery. He told us that the treasure had been in his possession for years, that he had never found it fail, and that the effect had been equally surprising upon numerous individuals who had borrowed it for some pressing journey. He brought witnesses highly respectable, and speaking in tones of the greatest apparent sincerity. The value of the object to anyone, outside its superstitious attributes, was simply nothing; but the sum we offered for it as a curious malformation was indignantly refused, and the owner never returned to bargain. The man himself, I believe, and his witnesses, I feel sure, did absolutely put this faith in an idiotic bit of horn, whose supposed powers could always be tested in two minutes. Whether this confidence worked its own reward, or whether, in case of failure, the difficulty was overcome by some such method as the spiritualist's

Shibboleth, "You have no faith," we could not boast sufficient fluency in Malay to ascertain; but perhaps neither one explanation nor the other is required. In England we see deceptions of much the same transparent character accredited, in spite of daily experience and disproof.

But we ourselves were unexpectedly called upon to contrive a charm or "ubat" of a very difficult nature. The "manang's" eldest daughter was married to a tall fellow belonging to a neighbouring house, and the pair visited the paternal roof during our stay. The girl had the handsomest face I ever saw among the Dyaks. Her eyes were very large and beautiful, nose finely cut, mouth small and expressive. Her teeth were black of course, but habit had already accustomed our eyes to this peculiar fashion, and in shape and regularity they were admirable. She possessed the points of national beauty in perfection; a mass of long black hair adorned her graceful head, and her hands and feet were the tiniest possible. But the husband was far from worthy of such a belle; his figure was that of a warrior of the first force, but he took an early opportunity of explaining to us that his parang was as yet unstained with an enemy's blood, nor had he ever borne a part in the campaigns of his tribe. He did not hesitate to assure us, in fact, that in time of danger his sensations were very curious, a *naïve* admission which his wife confirmed without any apparent shame or confusion. She

evidently looked upon her husband's weakness in this respect as an extraordinary freak of nature, for which he could not be held responsible by anyone.

But they both regarded our visit as an event designed by Providence to remove this unmanly foible, and without delay they requested of us a charm, capable of gaining the husband a worthy place among the warriors of his house. In the first place, we suggested gin as a valuable medicine under such circumstances, but the man was evidently acquainted with the evanescent properties of Dutch courage, and required something of a more enduring character. Finding escape from his importunities impossible, we made up some papers of mingled gunpowder, rhubarb, and magnesia, and presented them to our patient, with many injunctions about the state of the moon, and the grunting of his pigs, all of which he heard with the deepest awe, and I trust inwardly digested. But sitting beside him was his wife, with her mouth full of "penang," and her large black eyes fixed upon us so gravely, as to spoil the solemnity of the sacred rites by causing Arthur an explosion of laughter; we passed this off, however, as an essential part of the ceremony.

The "manang" himself, distrustful of his own science, was pressingly urgent for European medicine. Feeling considerable hesitation in trusting drugs to such inexperienced hands, we contented the old man by a present of a pound of gunpowder,

which is, I believe, beneficial in some cases, and at least can do little harm however recklessly administered.

After ten days' stay among the friendly folks of Sabooyong, we began to find Dyak fare somewhat monotonous. Our stores had already given out, and the Malay cook, though excellent when provided with spices and curry powders, becomes hopelessly incompetent if deprived of these luxuries. Bully supplied us liberally with fowls, and our guns occasionally procured game, but the natives never boil anything except rice and the edible fern, and meat roasted in their manner can with difficulty be distinguished from heated chips. Therefore we pined for the comforts of civilization, and resolved to return to Sakarran.

One morning accordingly, after administering ounces of medicine to some patients who were hopelessly ill, and to others who were absurdly well, after distributing fifteen pounds of Javanese tobacco among the men, and innumerable glass beads among the women, we bade farewell to our hospitable friends, and set out with Bully for the Residency, leaving, I hope, behind us none who were the worse for our sojourn, and many who in their simple way were the happier.

Living as we did with this honest and manly race, and watching their healthy existence, as devoid of real anxiety as of excitement, it was impossible altogether to escape the old, old question,—Are

these savages after all happier than we? In regard to the men an answer seems difficult. The male Dyak, with his childlike vanity and love of display, has contracted desires which his simple home cannot supply. Puzzled by the superiority of the white race, and envious of the thousand resources of civilization, he appears to be restless in his present tranquillity, though the direction of his ambition may be unintelligible even to himself.

I suppose that man was principally created for the purpose of making money—though in that case it seems difficult to understand the reason a wise Providence did not make him of cast iron, with internal steam power, like other machines—and from this point of view the Dyak organization is very imperfect; but regarded simply as human beings, these savages have the air of fulfilling sufficiently well the duties entailed upon them by that condition. Their minds are healthy as their bodies; theft and brawling and adultery, fruitful sources of disturbance in refined Europe, are unknown to them; their houses are comfortable, and small labour procures for them the means of life in abundance; in war they are fearless, and no domestic anxiety harasses their intervals of peace. If the Dyak could but be brought to know his own good-fortune, how happy should he be.

But he does NOT know his own good fortune, and I am not sure that he *is* happy. Therefore in very distant years, should he continue to live under the

gentle policy instituted by Rajah Brooke, and fortunately escape the slow and silent extermination which threatens all races who cannot understand the principles of trade, we may hope to see this generous savage become such a ghoul and caricature of humanity as is the mercantile Chinaman, even should he never attain the brilliant position occupied by the modern English tradesman.

But I cannot help thinking that the women here in the jungle are far happier than their sisters in England. They work hard, it is true, but surely that is at least a part of woman's mission, and the Dyak matrons can plainly observe the result of their labour in the increase of their own comfort and the content of their family. The unmarried girls are at perfect liberty to choose their mates without fear of parental wrath or the ostracism of society. The Dyak husband dreams not of desertion or debauchery, but preserves his vow of fidelity with a rectitude which makes jealousy a farce. No class in the tribe is condemned to teach the children all sorts of proprieties and catechisms which they are to forget with all rapidity when grown up, but the race does not appear to degenerate upon that account; a fact which is no doubt owing to their want of civilization. The instinct rendering a fault possible must always precede the prohibition.

CHAPTER IX.

Attack of Fever—Invitation to a Feast—Gasing's Gala Costume—Too Affectionate Friend—Dyak Beverage—Propitiation—Dance—Procession of Women—Singular Dances—Mischievous Girls—Strict Decorum—Pigeons—The Sumpitan—Upas Poison.

WE returned to Sakarran in our comfortable sampan, firing away at the alligators on the river bank in a reckless but ineffectual manner. About dinner-time we reached the fort, and experienced intense satisfaction in once more beholding the chairs and tables of civilization. The next day I was attacked by fever for the first time, but the fit yielded to quinine readily enough. The symptoms were an intense headache, pains in the joints, and a singular disinclination to move. In the case of persons not acclimatised, this country fever is sometimes very serious; acclimatisation removes all probability of an ill result. On the other hand, however, this process implies a peculiar facility for catching all sorts of disease which the new-comer escapes, and the perpetual consciousness of a liver. On the whole, I am glad we did not become acclimatised.

Two days after our return, when we were already meditating a visit to Seribas, an invitation was brought to us from the great chief Gasing to be present at a feast which he had proclaimed in one of his houses near the fort. As no opportunity had hitherto occurred of observing the Dyak habits on such an occasion, we deferred our departure for a short time in order to accept the invitation, which was good for three days. On the second day, when the feast would probably be at its height, we embarked in our sampan, carrying a present of beads and tobacco as a compliment to our hosts. After paddling an hour and a half, an increasing uproar warned us that our destination was at hand, and in a few moments the boat was put to the bank, and we landed among a crowd of young girls, who stood laughing and chattering over their water-jars. On climbing up the notched log into the house—which stood about fifty yards from the river bank—we were hospitably received by several chiefs, who shook hands with superfluous cordiality. With some difficulty we were conducted to the seats of honour, through a crush of smiling men and women, all arrayed in their gayest garments.

We found that the central portion of the outer verandah had been railed round with stout bamboos, preventing all possibility of falling over the edge; a precaution obviously necessary even at that time, for the abyss was very deep, and, though the day had scarcely yet reached noon, every man in the

house, without an exception, had taken more liquor than was good for him, and the majority were hopelessly drunk. A sort of eave had been erected round the top of the railing, and over this hung cloths and large handkerchiefs, throwing a strip of shadow over the chiefs sitting beneath. In the centre of the space thus protected was a great heap of spears, and parangs, and human heads, and strange articles of a miscellaneous nature, piled up thus, partly to display the wealth of the house, partly to clear the inner verandah for the crowd of humbler guests.

But the majesty of Gasing's appearance, and the solemnity of his array, were such as to defy description. In person the worthy old chief was tall, his face was long, eyes small, nose somewhat flat, and mouth very large. His skin was yellow and deeply wrinkled; his hair was worn short over the forehead, and hanging down behind. In the costume of private life, Gasing's appearance was rather striking, but when adorned for the feast he was truly grand.

Upon the very apex of his cranium, the brass top of a dragoon helmet was tied by a band of linen passing under the chin, and from this a mass of long black horsehair streamed down his back. Over his manly brow was fixed a brazen plate formerly belonging to one of Her Majesty's regiments, emblazoned with numerous victories in which the gallant corps had participated in various unknown

portions of the globe. What place or position this article may have occupied when borne by its original possessors I cannot conceive, but judging from the effect produced by it on old Gasing, I should be inclined to think that it was not worn on the forehead.

Upon his broad shoulders, and buttoned tightly over his chest, was the gorgeous uniform coat worn by consuls-general at the English court, and his lean, yellow thighs protruding from between the tails as he sat cross-legged on the floor produced the drollest effect. His stomach was equally adorned and protected by the plated cover of a soup tureen, of a pattern embossed in high relief. This was the brightest jewel of Gasing's crown, and an object of mad jealousy to neighbouring potentates. If ever the lawless times of old return to the Sea Dyaks, this tureen-cover will be an object of contention such as the world has not beheld since the days of Troy. And surely if men are determined to fight, a piece of brilliant tin, highly ornamented and adapted for the richest personal adornment, is a prize worthy of some sacrifice.

Thus arrayed, Gasing sat and perspired, an object of admiration to all his guests. The thick padding of his coat nearly stifled him; the tureen-cover banged uncomfortably against his stomach; to the meanest taste, naked legs popping from behind gold lace must have appeared incongruous; but Gasing was half drunk, and quite happy.

We shook hands with him and numerous other chiefs, who staggered to their feet for the ceremony, and then dropped helplessly into their places. They were all in that state which renders movement vague and inadvisable, so, as they occupied the shade, we were compelled to sit in the sun. Besides, the chiefs had discovered a use for the openings between the railings at the back, which the architect may have designed, or nature may have suggested, but which rendered these worthy but intemperate gentlemen more tolerable than they could have been under other circumstances. Upon the mats before them were piles of festive substances called eatables by the Dyaks, consisting of those sweet and indigestible compounds exhibited at children's feasts, heightened in flavour by being kept for weeks previously. These messes were heaped up on tall bronze dishes, but they had overflowed in half-eaten fragments all about the verandah. The smell was fearful.

We produced some pounds of tobacco as a present, which was instantly seized in a general scramble. All around were chiefs or tuahs, and as such had a right to share; drunkenness made them forget their usual politeness.

After a short time I could bear the sun's heat no longer, so I pulled a chief out of his seat and established myself in the shade. Arthur soon joined me. Up came an old man much marked with the small-pox, and put his arm affectionately

round my neck. At any time this would have been unpleasant, but at that moment the old fellow was very drunk, and I was melting in the heat. Time after time I pushed him off with considerable violence, but his good temper and his perseverance were invincible. By unremitting efforts I drove him to arms' length, but his hand on my shoulder was irremovable. We afterwards ascertained that this old man of the sea was a chief of immense influence on the Lower Sakarran, and standing very high in the opinion of the government for loyalty, bravery, and wisdom. He is ridiculously fond of white men, and I am not the first he has tormented.

In a few moments after our arrival the food yet remaining on the dishes was cleared away, but unfortunately the greater part was spilt in the confusion, and every one was far too drunk to venture on picking it up. But the smell was the inconvenience we found most pressing; such a digestion-disarranging odour I never experienced before, and nothing saved us from a severe catastrophe except the strong tobacco we were smoking.

The fact is that the Dyaks in private life are estimable from every point of view, and cleanliness is one of their virtues; but in entertaining their friends, of course they reverse the routine of ordinary life. I have heard of the same practice in England. The Dyak collects his guests and makes them drunk; in which point he is a few years

behind ourselves. He prepares for the great festivity months beforehand, stinting himself and running into debt, in order to exhibit a wealthy display to the eyes of his neighbours. But he does not attempt to conceal the domestic machinery which produces results so satisfactory, and a smell of cooking is the consequence, a little too powerful for the European nostril. This, however, is a mere matter of taste.

But whatever opinion may be held in regard to their domestic economy, at least our hosts were hospitable, and they lost little time in bringing us their national liquor. This beverage possessed a flavour such as is scarcely to be found among the drinkables of a civilized experience. It was kept in huge bathing jars disposed about the verandah, and it was handed about in cans, and jars, and bottles, and cocoa-nuts. The crowd of inferior warriors was constantly passing these vessels backwards and forwards, when full, to be instantly emptied—when empty, to be filled in all haste. In appearance it was like thin milk; the smell of it was as that of five-hundred negroes drunk in a slave-pen.

Dispassionately I should wish to analyse the taste of a liquid which has such a charm for three millions of human beings. When first taken into the mouth it suggests to the experimentalist an idea of cocoa-nut milk gone very sour, and holding in solution a considerable quantity of brown sugar

and old cheese; when it reaches the throat, the agonised novice is aware of a hot or peppery flavour, causing him to believe that starch, mingled with the strongest cayenne, must have a great share in the composition; and, finally, should it safely reach its destination, and the sufferer be compelled to put his head precipitately through the railing behind, he conceives with astonishing suddenness that he is waiting for the crisis in a rolling vessel at the change of the monsoons.

As soon as we had paid our hosts the compliment of drinking as much of this liquid as was humanly possible, the ceremonies in honour of our arrival were commenced with spirit. A tall fellow, very drunk, but equally lively, seized half a dozen fowls and shook them violently over our heads; they were held by the legs, and their miserable skulls were banged against ours in a vague sort of manner. We were afraid that their throats might be cut in that position, a compliment once paid to the Rajah Mudah: but we were not so much honoured. The idea of this proceeding was to secure the good fortune of the white men to the poultry of the house. When this object had been gained, the fowls were instantly killed and cooked. I am sure I hope we brought them luck.

Then up sprang two distinguished warriors, one merrily drunk, the other equally drunk, but sulky. With both arms outstretched and a sword in the right hand, they bobbed round and round the

verandah in a sort of maniacal waltz one behind the other. The grace which they would doubtless have displayed under circumstances more favourable, was considerably diminished by continual stumbles and staggers, caused by collision with some guest too uproariously drunk to get out of the way.

Then two chiefs in embroidered sarongs, and jackets stiff with gold lace, selected each a head from the central heap, and danced off with them, facing one another. Rolling and tripping they went round, until they tumbled among a circle of warriors squatting around a big jar of liquor.

But, meantime, the female portion of the assembly had been preparing for their part in the proceedings. At this moment they came from the interior of the house, and the startling magnificence of their appearance showed that time and labour had not been spared in arraying themselves for this great occasion. From the neck to the hips they were covered over with large agate beads; string of them was heaped on string, till many of the women were cuirassed an inch thick in solid stone before and behind. Upon their heads was placed a piece of bead-embroidered cloth, in which were arranged thin skewers of painted wood about five inches long; there were about twenty of these bits of wood disposed about their heads, and each was attached to the other by strings of brilliant glass beads. Five or six of these many-coloured loops hung from each skewer, and they were intertwined

into a graceful network. The effect was very pretty, though barbarous; and the solemnity of the ceremonies was much enhanced by the stately uprightness which the women were compelled to preserve in moving, on peril of disarrangement to this delicate structure.

In dead silence and much mysterious gravity, the procession marched three times round the house, headed by Gasing's wife. For this occasion only she had been trusted with the consular coat and the plated tureen cover; apparently, however, she differed from her husband as to the proper use of the latter ornament, for, while he wore it hanging in front, she wore it hanging behind.

During the passage of this procession, the men had attempted to preserve silence and a show of decorum; but when the women had disappeared to remove their finery, noise and uproar broke forth again. Everyone who could keep his feet began to dance, and those who were already helpless endeavoured to yell. The Terpsichorean performances were of all kinds, generally accompanied by astonishing noises and much confusion. Gasing was either too grand or too drunk to engage in such activities; but he interested himself in the efforts of his friends, and organized several sets with great success. One of these was very extraordinary and unintelligible. A tall chief produced a sort of cat-o'-nine-tails, another a human head, and the two joined in a frantic race round the verandah. Then

the head-holder faced about, and pirouetted with one leg in the air, while he alternately advanced and withdrew the trophy in his hand; meanwhile, the chief armed with the cat-o'-nine-tails lashed vigorously at the surrounding multitude, and both performers laughed derisively at each cut. When the demands of exhausted nature compelled these two to bury their heads in a bathing-jar, four or five others took their place, provided with blocks of wood having a feather at each end; we took these to represent canoes, but Gasing assured us that they were intended to portray the "rhinoceros hornbill," and were considered by all competent judges to be rather fine works of art. Then a number of gongs were suddenly beaten, and swords, and cat-o'-nine-tails, and heads, and rhinoceros hornbills began to sway about over the heads of a mass of human beings who were executing some extraordinary ballet adapted to their state of mind and body.

But, meantime, the girls and women, having doffed their apparel of festivity, began again to mingle with the crowd in ordinary costume. No Delilah of Europe better knows her power to make a fool of a strong man than one of these Dyak sirens, nor is more inclined to exercise her fascination. The presence of the female element was soon felt in the noise and confusion, which absolutely seemed to increase. Several of the girls were so charming as to excuse the infatuation of their victims, and I

need scarcely say that the prettiest were the most culpable. But, ugly or beautiful, old or young, all instantly employed their most cunning arts in enticing the bravest and most famous warriors to drink and drink again. We saw a little beauty seat herself lovingly beside a tall fellow with a simple face and honest eyes, whom she coaxed to toast her from a large jar which she offered to his lips, until he fairly fell backwards upon the floor. This satisfactory conclusion attained, his tormentor, who, we heard, was affianced to him, ran screaming with laughter to bring seven other wretches as mischievous as herself to jeer at the vanquished lover. Raising her hopes to sport of a higher order, she shortly after brought her jar to the spot where we sat, in the hope, no doubt, of beguiling the white men into the same condition as her other adorers; but in Europe we are accustomed to run the gauntlet of more dangerous fascinations, and she relinquished the attempt in despair.

But I ought to set the reader right upon a point nearly touching the breeding and propriety of our Dyak friends. In England such a scene of drunkenness and uncouth merriment as I have described would necessarily be coarse and disgusting to the last degree, but among these savages it was not so. We did not see a single act of impropriety, even among the most reckless of the revellers, and the brutality inseparable from a heavy "wine" at Oxford or Cambridge was utterly absent. We were assured

that during the whole festivity decorum would be maintained as strictly as it was in our presence, nor would any Dyak dream of violating the laws of decency and good temper. Whether this be owing to the national character or to the quality of the liquor I cannot judge, inasmuch as it was impossible for us to swallow enough of the latter to decide, but I am inclined to think that barbarous manhood and savage modesty were the principal causes of public decency. Thus it happened that a scene which, according to all precedent should have been disgusting, turned out to be pleasantly amusing.

When we were tired of watching the antics of the men, we went into the interior of the house to distribute our beads. As soon as the news spread among the women and girls, the chamber in which we sat was instantly blockaded by a crowd of petitioners. It struck me as singular that all the oldest and ugliest of the females were most anxious for personal adornment; but perhaps Darwin's Theory of Necessity and Natural Selection will account for this circumstance also. The fact is that, properly applied, this theory can be made to account for anything.

Among the crowd of claimants were several really pretty girls. These seemed to depend more upon the expression of their eyes and the grace of their attitude, to obtain their ends, than on the vociferation of their tongues. One of the loveliest children

I ever saw was a little Dyak girl, about ten years of age, among this crowd. Her large velvety eyes turned from one to another of us with a beseeching expression, which no quantity of beads seemed to allay. She was the daughter of an important chief on the Lower Sakarran, who sat in the verandah without, his head adorned with a green velvet smoking cap, given him by Mr. Brereton, and his feet thrust into a pair of Chinese grass slippers, about as useful to him as an umbrella to a flying fish.

After half an hour of merry conversation in the house we entered our sampan and returned down the river, shooting pigeons as we went. Of this bird there are many sorts in Borneo, some exceedingly beautiful. The largest we obtained in the country was about the size of a fat fowl, but we heard that a larger species exists; the plumage, however, of these immense fellows is comparatively dull. The kind most brilliant in colour is about as large as the European fantail; its neck is yellow, breast blue, back pink, wings black and white. But the colouring of this species is too gaudy for elegance, and others less varied in tint are much more beautiful.

The Dyaks capture these birds with the sumpitan or blow-pipe. This is a tube of hard wood, about eight feet long, fitted at the further end with a sight and a broad spear-head, so placed as not to interfere with the flight of the arrow. The manner

of boring these tubes I cannot describe, as I never witnessed the process,* but their accuracy is marvellous, and years must be consumed in the manufacture of a single sumpit. The thorn of the sago palm supplies a natural arrow, hard, pointed, and admirably adapted to the purpose. It is from six to eight inches long, quite straight, and equally thick from base to point. The blunt end is encased in a cube of compressed pith, fitting exactly to the hollow of the tube. The mouth-piece is held between the index and the second finger of the left hand, while the right supports the sumpit, of which the weight is so considerable that a strong arm and much practice can alone enable a man to direct it. Forty yards is the most effective range of the weapon, but experienced lungs can project the arrow to eighty yards; at this distance, however, it will not break the human skin. The poison in which the darts are dipped is probably extracted from the upas tree, but at present this is not certainly ascertained. After two hours' exposure to the atmosphere the power of the venom evaporates, and must be renewed from the little bamboo case which the warrior carries. Its effect is rapid, and a man dies about half an hour after being wounded.

* We were told that they are bored in precisely the same manner as the long pipe-stems of jasmine and cherry-stick sold in the Cairene bazaars. This information is not so full as might be wished, for I never could comprehend the principle of the latter. It is done in some way with a piece of string, but I do not know how, though I have seen the process in Egypt.

He apparently expires without pain, in a narcotic stupor, but spirits are found to be an antidote to this as to other external poisons. The Tuan Mudah told us that once on a jungle expedition he came upon a score of Dyak warriors, lying as if asleep, in a secluded glade. In one or two cases a single drop of blood was congealed upon their broad chests, but no wound could be found on the persons of the majority. They had been killed with the sumpitan by some lurking Pakatans. One of the wounded was not yet quite dead, and a plentiful application of brandy, combined with forced exercise for some hours, eventually preserved his life.

The fact that the blow-pipe is used by the Dyaks and by the natives of South America alone, together with their common ignorance of the bow, that weapon almost universal, has suggested to some minds a theory of the origin of a race apparently autochthonic, in connecting Borneo with the great continent of the West. At present, however, science has failed to produce any other analogy between these countries, and no theorist, ingenious though he be, can make out a strong case with the facts at present in hand. I speak with the utmost diffidence, for I do not understand the Dyak language, but it appears to me that their tongue differs far less from the Malay than many of the Malay dialects differ among themselves. We could frequently comprehend the purport of the Dyak

conversation, and our wants were generally more or less intelligible to them. In the matter of personal characteristics I can speak with more confidence, and I think a careful examination of the peculiarities of the two races would lead any observer to the conclusion of their identity. The Dyak is taller, fairer, and better-looking, but his mode of life will explain away all these differences easily and rationally; his build, his features, and the shape of his head seem thoroughly Malay.

CHAPTER X.

Miserable Morning—The Brok—Paham—Gasing's House—Renunciation of our Project of reaching Pontianak Overland—Dyak Meal—Gasing's Valour—Pig Hunt—Voyage to Linga—Penang-chewing—Strange Mode of Skinning—"Bore"—Banting Mission—Fruits—"Mias"—Scarlet Monkeys—Tailed Men—Dyak Intellect—Treatment of Sick—Linga Fort—Alligators—Return to Kuching.

SOME days after the feast described in the preceding chapter, Arthur and I parted company for the first time; he went with Mr. Stuart Johnson to visit the latter in his fort of Seribas, while I descended the river to Gasing's house, to stay a day or two with the old chief.

On a morning most rainy and miserable the Tuan Mudah and myself left Sakarran Fort in a large sampan, accompanied by two monkeys, a young bear, and several coops of poultry. A palm tree on a wet day presents to my mind the very sign and emblem of misery, and Sakarran Fort is surrounded by lofty penang palms. When the rain falls upon them the graceful leaves droop, the fronds contract, the crown draggles like a wet ostrich plume. An oak or an elm in a shower is much like an oak or an elm in sunshine, but a wet palm tree is a most

melancholy anomaly. Who can preserve his cheerfulness in beholding this sight? The Tuan Mudah and I sat in silence, watching the steady pour of the rain, the swift and muddy current over which we sped, the dense vegetation of the banks, yesterday tender as fairyland, now dashed coarsely to the earth, while we descended the river at the utmost speed of twenty paddles. The Tuan Mudah was due at Linga Fort, a distance of 130 miles, before night, and the crew knew that no rest was to be anticipated before arrival, so they worked with a will.

In the bows of the sampan was fastened a young ape of the common kind, called "brok" by the Malays. This term applies, I believe, to all the different species of ape, in contradistinction to the "kra," which is equivalent to our "monkey." This brok had been presented to the Tuan Mudah at Kennowit, where they are very common. Though not yet a quarter grown, it was already most hideous. Its fur was brownish grey, brows very heavy, eyes fierce, cunning, and mischievous. These Kennowit broks are the most amusing of all the apes. The "wa-was" are beautiful and most affectionate, but they have not the merest notion of fun; the "mias" are quaint, but stupid and inactive; the "kras" are full of life and motion, and sometimes are mischievous, but they have not the mobility of feature, nor the intense drollery of manner which the "broks" possess. On the other

hand, the latter grow to an inconvenient size, and their behaviour is wanting in refinement even in comparison with other monkeys. Mr. Cruickshank possessed one at Kennowit as large as a retriever dog, though not so long in the body. He was usually a good-natured old fellow, very fond of biting harmlessly with his vast jaws; but occasionally he gave way to a paroxysm of fury most unpleasant to all within reach; nor when the irritation was calmed did he readily forget the provocation.

But to watch the varying expression of this little "brok's" features, as it sat out in the rain, on the extreme point of the bows, was most droll. It showed all the shades and degrees of disgust and impotent fury, from simply scowling at us from under its heavy brows, to the last sign of rage in a Kennowit brok—that of dancing on its fore-legs like an animated seesaw.

The rain still was pouring heavily when we reached Gasing's house, situated about fifteen or twenty miles down the river. The sampan was put to the bank as closely as possible, but I landed in mud up to the knee, for the tide, which is felt far beyond Sakarran, was at its lowest ebb. Fortunately, I was attired in very loose muslin "pangammas," and my feet were bare. All our boatmen and servants, except my own, had been left at the fort, for my intention was to rejoin the Tuan Mudah at Linga, and return to Kuching with him in the *Venus*, which lay waiting in the river. My

body-servant alone accompanied me on this visit to Gasing, and he exhibited his usual incompetence on the occasion. I have not hitherto troubled the reader with our domestic difficulties, for these things, though sufficiently exciting to the victims, have but little interest for the bystanders; but all who have travelled in the East will have taken for granted that the carelessness and stupidity of our servants were the greatest annoyance we had to endure, and their own experience will suggest the details which I have spared. Those who as yet are acquainted only with the harmless delinquencies of Jeames or Syusan, can form no idea of the vexation an Asiatic servant can cause, without a long catalogue of trivial grievances and annoyances, which we now endeavour to forget in the pleasant recollection of our travels. We were indeed fortunate in securing Ali Kasut as our general manager, but his health was very delicate, and he was continually invalided; besides, we could not expect him to watch the proceedings of every boy and boatman and servant, who jocosely called himself subject to our orders. But this matter is almost as absurd and ignoble in retrospect as it was irritating at the moment, and I should not have mentioned it, had not the idiocy of my servant Paham nearly reduced me to the greatest straits on this occasion.

But Paham—signifying "clever," which he was not—deserves a description on his own account. I think he was the greatest swell I ever saw. When

the difficulties of his situation are considered, and the moral effort necessary to overcome national feelings and customs, I think it must be admitted that Paham was a natural or essential swell. It is not that the Malays take no delight in gorgeous raiment; on the contrary, purple and fine linen, gold-embroidered, are to them as necessaries of life; but, though personally very cleanly, they do not seem to be so careful as to the state of their silken sarongs and laced jackets. Their lips, too, are invariably stained with the crimson juice of the penang, with which also their chins are frequently ensanguined, producing an effect upon the unaccustomed European not far from disgusting. But this was not the case with my jewel of a servant. His clothes were not merely clean, but they fitted neatly to his neat limbs, and were worn with an air as different from that of the glittering guys around as the air of a veteran in the Guards differs from that of a militiaman.

His face too was exceedingly handsome, though vain and indolent in expression. He was a native of Pontianak, and after the story recounted to us by Ali Kasut, of the Arab reis in whose vessel we ran from Maritibas to the Batang Lupar, Paham appropriated the romantic incident, and gave out that his own father also was a great chief in Pontianak, and that he had fled from home for the murder of a Dutchman. The story may have been true, of

course, but at the same time Paham was a great liar. He possessed a quantity of valuable weapons: ivory-hilted krises adorned with gold, carved spear-shafts, with long sockets of chased silver, sabres with handles of silver, and crimson sword-knots, silk sarongs heavy with gold thread; in fact, if Paham was compelled to fly from Pontianak at all, it seemed probable that it was for a lesser offence than murder. However, I never missed anything of mine, and I trust he was honest as he was handsome.

The night before we left Sakarran, I had given orders to Ali Kasut to prepare all necessaries for a stay of two or three days among the Dyaks, and Paham assured me at bed-time that this was done. Therefore, when we landed in the mud, I was considerably astonished to find that no provisions for our use were forthcoming. A servant gorgeously attired is pleasant to look upon in the dining-room, but he is apt to be embarrassed on finding himself up to the knees in mud, with a consciousness that he wears his very best silk trousers. Consequently, Paham stood helplessly still in the rain, while I made frantic inquiries about the "country captains," and the curries, and the savoury meats, which should have been provided to alleviate our sojourn. The Tuan Mudah in compassion finally ordered his servants to relieve us; they accordingly thrust some plates into Paham's hands, who commenced to wade off with them through the black mud, holding

above his head a sabre, a kris, a dish of curry, a tambok* full of my clothes, and a bundle of his own apparel, with which he designed to fascinate every girl in Gasing's house.

When we had climbed the slippery bank and reached the building above, we found it untenanted, save by four aged and ruffianly hags, and two aged and mangy dogs; all the other inhabitants, men, women, children, and dogs, were still at the great feast up the river, but were expected to return in the afternoon. Paham established himself in a trough as large as a four-post bedstead, used for drying paddy in after harvest, and produced a manuscript containing the voyages of Nikodah—somebody—a great Malay traveller of a former age. With this book he entertained himself for a time until the wonders therein described caused him a crisis of devotional feeling, and he invoked Allah, Abraham, and various other powers. Finally, he produced a Koran, and commenced reading it aloud in the sing-song intonation which Mussulmans affect on such occasions.

For my own part I wandered about the clearing; I teased the monkeys therein confined; I stretched myself in a paddy trough and smoked disconsolately;

* A "tambok" is a basket, or rather pannier woven of split ratans stained in various patterns. Many of these tamboks are most beautiful in colour and design; but all the Orientals have a taste for this class of ornament, which the European can admire and imitate, but cannot rival.

I sketched with a recklessness of touch productive of very surprising effects; I polished my rifle till it was nearly red-hot; and finally, overcome by the horror of my solitude, I was just comparing the advantages of drinking myself into a state of unconsciousness, or of maddening the four horrid old women by sending a bullet through the bunch of sooty heads over the hearth, when Gasing and his wife, with some others of the clan, strolled in, dripping with perspiration, but quite unfatigued.

I despair of picturing to the reader the miserable solitude from which they delivered me. The rain had ceased, but no sun as yet appeared to uplift the drenched vegetation; a dull and misty heat overpowered the limbs; in all the weary vista of the house no living thing could be seen save the four drivelling old hags pressing their wrinkled bodies almost into the fire; no sound could be heard but the monotonous flapping of the wet banana leaves outside, and the droning voice of Paham intoning the Koran; certainly, if we had lighted on many days as miserable as that, our visit to Sarawak would have been very much shorter than it was.

But it finally determined me to terminate our travels. The great object we had in view,—that of being the first white men to traverse Borneo from Sarawak to Pontianak,—was put out of the question by the failure of the Kyans, through whose territory our journey lay, to ratify peace with the Rajah.

If the ambassadors of that numerous people had come down to Kennowit according to agreement, and fulfilled the antique ceremonies of friendship rendering their country moderately safe to enter, we had hoped by ascending the Upper Rejang to its source, then traversing a tract of jungle, to reach a large lake of the interior from which descends the river of Pontianak. On this long journey, however, we should have been entirely dependent upon the Kyan chiefs, for guides, protection, and provisions, and after the provocation offered to them by the slaughter of their herald and warriors on the Rejang, any reliance upon their goodwill or assistance would have been simple folly; and, in fact, until the treacherous murder referred to had been explained by the Rajah's messengers, and reparation made, no one could blame the Kyan chiefs for retaliating upon any white man coming from the country that had done them such wrong.

Though this expedition was prohibited by such unfortunate circumstances, we had hitherto made an active use of our time. We had visited every fort and station of the Sarawak territory, and had probably seen more of the outward aspect of the country than any European connected with it. We had visited both the Land and Sea Dyaks in their own homes, and had made acquaintance with some of their most celebrated chiefs. If, by ill-fortune, the main object of our voyage had failed, at least our travels had introduced us to most of the points

of interest in a kingdom whose history in connexion with Rajah Brooke has been the most romantic story of modern times. And, therefore, since we regarded ourselves as mere wanderers, neither scientific nor anthropological, we decided that, our curiosity being already satisfied by the experiences of four months, nothing more remained for us to do in this country but to take our passage by the *Rainbow* and return to England.

But to resume the account of our last days among the Dyaks. When Gasing and his wife came home,—the consular coat, the tureen cover, and the other ornaments of festivity carefully stowed away in a "tambok,"—matters became a little more amusing. I entered the old chief's apartment, and chatted and dozed, while his wife prepared something to eat, for evening was at hand. The eatables which she produced consisted of a pig's leg, and a quantity of rice, boiled in bamboos, and then thrust out in a mass, like the rolly-polly pudding of our infancy. The pig's leg was cured according to the Dyak fashion, the process of which I do not know; but when concluded, the meat is exactly like gelatine, surrounded by an inch thick envelope of coke. I had already devoured the curry presented by the Tuan Mudah, and when Gasing invited me to partake of this dish I accepted with the greatest cordiality; the choice lay between this gelatined pork and a roast fowl in the Dyak manner; I had already tried the latter, and pre-

ferred the ills I knew not of. But Paham's astonishment and disgust when he came to me with a wretched fowl roasted to a cinder, and found me preparing to attack the gelatined coke, was worthy of the most accomplished "Jeames" of England. He stared at me speechless; I said in a dignified manner,—"Paham, what do you want?" "Is the Tuan going to eat that pig?" I said, "Yes! and you may go and eat the fowl." He turned on his heel and disappeared; I heard him laugh for five minutes outside the door, and then he went back to his Koran in the paddy trough, singing a very loose song in a very loud tone.

When the pork was cooked Gasing's wife provided me with a plate of gorgeous colours, and a bamboo fork, with which to eat the pile of gelatine which she hospitably offered me. I found it tough and tasteless, and terrible to the teeth. I will not say more about it except that it smelt, but of all the perils and difficulties into which our jungle rambles led us, that dinner of mine was considered in Kuching to be the most extraordinary and adventurous.

As soon as the meal was over I finished my sketches, and then Gasing and I went to sleep like the babes in the wood, side by side. We dozed until aroused by another arrival of guests from the great feast. The men looked horribly seedy, and showed a strong tendency to sit with their backs to the glare of sunset on the river without, but the

women, before resting, were compelled to prepare the paddy for their families. They set to work with the huge poles I have described, and stamped and pounded until the primeval curse was realised, and in the literal sweat of their bodies they ate bread. There was one wrinkled and hideous hag, who worked with that warmth and vigour that I would not have eaten a grain of her paddy for the bribe of a kingdom.

The male portion of this community had been drunk for four consecutive days, and that upon such liquor as would have disagreed with a walrus. No wonder they had headaches! I believe that two or three days more of such festivities as they had been holding would literally have killed them. But no peace was to be found in the domestic circle, where at least it might have been expected. The women and girls teased them without mercy, but the good-natured fellows smiled miserably, and kept their eyes fixed on the floor. Notwithstanding the hammerlike pulsation of their brows, these bold warriors steadily assisted me in the consumption of a bottle of sherry which I had brought for my own use. Seeing this, I produced a square flask of Hollands, which they attacked readily, leaving me the milder liquid. Towards ten o'clock in the evening they became quite lively again, thanks to this stimulant. Gasing gave me a minute but unintelligible description of the great fight in which he secured ten Chinese pigtails, now

adorning the sheath of his sabre. The heads of these victims to his prowess were proudly pointed out to me hanging over the fireplace.

Mrs. Gasing, who was evidently a person of great importance in the house, then requested a description of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, of which some Resident had told her. I assured the audience that this wonderful building was as big as a mountain, and they asked if Dyaks lived in it. As at Sabooyong, my assertion that white men alone inhabited England was received with evident incredulity; but my listeners were too polite to contradict. They then inquired about the climate of England, and many were the incomprehensible drolleries exchanged upon the description of "sarong tangan," or gloves. They listened with much courtesy and some hesitation to my account of ice and snow, but when I ventured upon the assertion that neither rice nor jungle existed in Europe, I found that I had trusted their politeness too far. Gasing's wife drily observed as she wrapped a fresh piece of penang in the siri leaf,—"There are great wonders in the Tuan's country;" upon which a smile went round over the circle of dusky faces.

We were presently joined by Hindoo, Gasing's only daughter, a charmingly pretty girl of about sixteen years. She had not much to say, but made an admirable use of her eyes upon the younger warriors.

The next morning we all went out into the jungle to look for pigs, but I did not get a shot at them. On the following day I asked Gasing to give me men for the voyage to Linga Fort, a distance of one hundred miles and more. The good old man consented instantly, though, as I afterwards ascertained, the request must have been exceedingly inconvenient at the moment, for the very crisis of the paddy season was at hand. I distributed beads and tobacco to every one in the house, and then waded through the thick mud to the sampan.

We saw several great green alligators dozing on the river bank, but they always glided noiselessly into the water before I could get a satisfactory sight of them. Just before the mid-day halt, we descried a pig swimming boldly across the river in defiance of the hideous reptiles. We gave chase instantly, and most exciting it was; piggy very soon made out that he was pursued, and put on a spurt. I stood up in the stern of the sampan—at imminent risk of upsetting it—and cheered on the Dyaks. Paham shouted and screamed—he always took an opportunity of doing so;—piggy snorted hard, but wasted no time in turning his head; he had a long start, for we had nearly a quarter of a mile to go while he swam eighty or a hundred yards, for we spied him in mid-stream. Just as he climbed the bank I put a bullet into him; he dropped, but rose again, and dashed into the

jungle, where we had neither time nor care to follow him.

These water pig hunts are very common in Sarawak, and they are great fun. As we ascended the Rejang in the *Jolly Bachelor*, we assisted at two such, one of which lasted half an hour. Mr. Hay, the former Resident of Muka, chased a very big fellow in the broad Rejang river for that length of time, and finally killed him. In the other case, we had no small boat available, and piggy escaped with running the gauntlet.

Gasing's sampan was not provided with an awning, and from seven in the morning until six at night I was exposed to the fiercest rays of the sun. Fortunately, I suffer very little from heat, and Linga was reached with no worse result than a slight headache. But I have once or twice felt the horror of the tropical sun to an extent which I could not possibly describe, and that too when in good general health, and without any perceptible difference in the circumstances. Upon one occasion, I stood for five minutes upon the river bank below Government House, waiting the transit of the ferry-boat from the other side, and during that time the rays of the vertical sun upon my head caused me an agony of dizzy suffocation, such as I can never forget. But the day that we descended to Linga, I remained ten hours in a heat as great without appreciable inconvenience.

I believe my headache was caused by the in-

ordinate quantity of "penang" which I chewed on the voyage. As with other stimulants it is much easier to acquire the habit than to discontinue it, and certainly penang is a more wholesome excitant than spirits. Its effects are of course different upon different constitutions, and several of the Sarawak officers who use the nut habitually, have assured me that it has not and never had any stimulating effect upon them. For my own part, I could use penang as a substitute for brandy in case I wished to restore my forces, and it would have the same result. Too much of it, however, gives one the same sensation which we dimly recollect at school as connected with our first pipe of shag. But in jungle travel penang is a most useful stimulant, as it does not affect either the feet or the eyesight as an overdose of brandy is apt to do. Its worst feature is the effect it has upon the teeth. The Malays indeed say that it preserves them, but they cannot be called competent witnesses, since they file off the enamel before taking to the use of the nut, and it is certain that it stains the teeth and lips terribly. The taste of the penang nut itself is rather insipid, but the siri leaf, the lime, the gambier, and the tobacco, which are added to it, give a pungency and acridity to the composition which make it more palatable.

About two o'clock in the afternoon we fastened our sampan securely to the bank, and entered a Dyak house to await the passing of the "bore,"

which is very dangerous on this Batang Lupar river. I lunched upon a fowl roasted to the consistency of bamboo, a quantity of boiled rice, and some extraordinary substances resembling pickles, which Gasing produced from his private stores. While waiting here I saw, for the first time, one of the ingenious pouches which the Dyaks make from the skins of wild animals. We had heard much of this process, by which the skins of squirrels and other small game are removed without cutting or damaging the fur; but hitherto, we had not succeeded in finding anyone skilled in the art. The Tuah of this house, however, had killed a pretty grey squirrel with his sumpitan, and was engaged in stripping off its skin when we entered. He widened the mouth by slicing it down to the neck on either side, and then he turned the body of the animal quite inside out, cutting through the legs, and leaving the feet in the skin. When all was completed, a perfect little bag was produced, open at the mouth alone, quite water-tight, and gracefully adorned at the lower end by the striped and bushy tail. It was designed to contain the Tuah's siri and penang.

I told the Dyaks to call me as soon as the "bore" made its appearance, and at their first warning I hastened to the river bank. This phenomenon, which occurs at the change of every tide, is to be seen, I believe, in most rivers on the eastern coast of England; but the bore upon the Batang Lupar, sweeping through the grandeur of a tropical forest,

can bear little resemblance to that seen passing along the fens of Lincolnshire, or the foggy meadows of Suffolk. The roar of the approaching water was heard long before it came in sight, but just as I reached the river's edge, a thundering bank of brown foam dashed past with the speed of light, and rushing up the stream echoed away into the distance. The great jungle trees shook their green heads, as the swift water struck their roots, the sampan heaved up and tugged at its moorings, men shouted, dogs howled, an icy wind swept over us, and lo! the bore was past, and the safety of our voyage ensured.

We reached Linga about seven o'clock in the evening, bringing with us a quantity of game shot on the way, which was very valuable to the Tuan Mudah's cook. Vainly, however, had I expended nearly half a canister of gunpowder upon some huge white birds of a species which we had not hitherto encountered; they seemed to resemble cranes in every respect except size, but were so wild that our sampan could not be brought within two hundred yards of them, and I did not succeed in securing a specimen. Curlews and plovers were in considerable abundance, when the scarcity of all birds in the tropics is considered; of the smaller species of hornbill too I shot a pair.

When dinner was served, however, I inquired for the curlews, which are a great dainty. The reason they were not forthcoming was soon given.

Gasing had appropriated them without any words whatever.

I slept on board the *Venus* that night. Returning to the fort in the morning, the Tuan Mudah proposed a visit to Banting, a Dyak settlement about five miles from Linga. A mission has been appointed to this place under the management of two English clergymen, who have established a church and a school for the education of such children as they can procure. The Dyaks of Banting were formerly among the most warlike races of the island, maintaining their feud with the tribes of Seribas and Sakarran as strictly as their alliance with our friends upon the Undup. When the latter were expelled from their lands by the great "Balla," many of them fled to recruit the forces of these ancient allies at Linga. The houses of the Bantings, which we passed on our way to the Mission, resembled those I have previously described in every point except length; in this respect they far exceeded any building we had hitherto observed, but their elevation from the ground was not considerable.

The hill upon which the mission-house, the church, and the schools are situated, is the noblest orchard that could be conceived. Its height would almost entitle it to the name of mountain, and from top to bottom its steep sides are covered with the various fruit-trees of Sarawak. Mangusteins, mangoes, lancets, rambutans, Chinese gooseberries,—the

catalogue would be a volume by itself if I knew the names of all the fruits that grow there; but, above all, in the opinion of the natives,—and not only of them, but of Europeans long settled in the country,—Banting-hill bears "duriens" in abundance. This extraordinary fruit grows at the top of a lofty tree. As always happens in the tropics, it is protected externally by a very thick rind, which, in addition, bears an armour of strong thorns as hard as iron. The fruit is about eight inches long, and six in diameter; when it becomes ripe it drops from the twig to which it hung, and woe to the unfortunate man or animal who happens to be passing beneath. The old fable of the atheist and the acorn is practically realised, and the result is much to the detriment of the atheist.

If the reader has ever seen the bracelet with which, in Italy, the player at "pallone" protects his wrist, he will be able to form an admirable idea of the appearance of a durien. But its odour can neither be suggested by the bracelet of "pallone," nor by anything else, except an open drain, or the smell of the Thames some years ago. This it is which causes the novice to turn pale at the thought of it, and induces the rash vow that never shall the unhallowed fruit be eaten within his gates. But in time this oath is broken; the passion which all around him entertain for it, their assurances that the smell is attached to the thorny skin alone, and, I believe, some mysterious affinity between its

fruit and the climate, finally overpower his first feeling of disgust: the griffin tastes the durien, and behold, it is very good.

That is to say—for we were not long enough in the country to become enthusiastic upon the subject—it is not bad. When the rind is split off, it is found to contain a number of large black seeds, each incased in a thick pulp, both in appearance and in taste much resembling custard; but there is a faint flavour of onion about this custard, which, though a source of delight to the durien epicure, is not quite so nice to the mere amateur in fruits. It must also be admitted that the odour is really confined to the outer skin, nor is any trace of it to be detected in the pulp of the fruit.

In Singapore "Durien Clubs" have been formed among the wives and families of the German residents, who form a numerous society there. The sole object of these institutions is to obtain as many opportunities as possible for enjoying a luxury which must make the atmosphere of any house into which it enters utterly insupportable for some hours afterwards. Accordingly the club meets at the residence of each member in turn, and as soon as the male portion of the family have departed to their "gōdowns,"—as warehouses are called in Singapore—the duriens are introduced. None of the masculine gender have ever penetrated these mysteries, and rumour confines itself to the statement that the number of the fruit devoured is incredible. We

are told that the ladies in the East eat far more of them at a sitting than the men, but I cannot think this possible. How could they contain the quantity?

The great abundance of fruit at Banting naturally attracts thither numbers of the various birds and animals which live upon such food. In especial the spot is haunted by the "mias" * of both species, and, in fact, this is the only locality at present known where they can always be procured. The gentleman whom we found assisting Mr. Chambers in his mission labours had, in the course of a few months, shot eight of these animals, which are very destructive, though in no way dangerous. The nest-building ape of which M. du Chaillu speaks, is not the only species which has this constructive faculty; in the tall durien trees we saw several umbrella-like erections, which, we were assured, were put together by the mias as a protection from the rains and the heavy dews of night.

But, as we were told, there is another species of ape peculiar to Banting. Several times a group of animals of the Simian tribe have been observed there, bearing a strong resemblance, at a distance, to a crowd of soldiers in the scarlet uniform of the English army. Up to the present time all efforts to obtain a specimen have been in vain, and it is still uncertain whether they should be classed among apes or monkeys; but as far as has been

* Known to us as the orang-outang—the great ape.

ascertained they appear to belong to the former genus. Their heads are apparently of the brightest scarlet, and a broad stripe of the same colour follows the outline of the shoulders and terminates in a point at the base of the backbone. Several missionaries and natives have had a distant opportunity of noticing these brilliant animals, but they seem to be more active and migratory than the majority of apes, and their evening haunt is deserted in the dawn.

At this place also we again meet with the story of tailed men existing in the interior of the country. A belief in this phenomenon is universal among the Malays and Sea Dyaks, who have almost succeeded in convincing their English rulers. The facts reported are always of the same character. A small tradesman or pedlar wanders up one of the larger rivers into the untravelled jungle region, and on his return relates either that he has traded and conversed with these people, or that he has visited their deserted houses and seen *the benches on which they are accustomed to sit, each pierced in a convenient spot with a small hole, allowing the tail to pass comfortably through.* It is reported that these extraordinary beings are like other Dyaks in every respect except the tail; this appendage is about four inches long, quite stiff, and sometimes covered with hair. I believe that medical science relates several cases of men born with a tail such as described, owing to a malformation of the backbone; but the idea of a nation

thus deformed making holes in benches and so on, is too absurd. Nevertheless, the story goes from mouth to mouth; hundreds of eye-witnesses to its truth could be procured without difficulty; hundreds of respectable men are prepared to swear that they have not only seen but felt the tails, and incredulity had best be courteously dumb.

Some Europeans, struck by the universal faith in so monstrous a legend, have been induced to surmise that its origin should be sought in the use of the matting which Dyaks, when in the jungle, attach to the hinder part of the "chowat" to preserve them from the damp of the earth in sitting down; but these little mats are from fifteen to eighteen inches long and a foot wide, swaying lightly with every movement. It is difficult to perceive how any mistake could arise from this source; at the same time no man would care brutally to pronounce all the natives who give this testimony to be a crowd of liars, and therefore let us laugh and wait.

We landed at the foot of the hill, and walked up to the mission, which is situated nearly on its summit. A winding path among the fruit-trees made an exceedingly pretty approach to Mr. Chambers' residence, and the view from his windows over the plain towards Linga was very extensive and beautiful. There seems to be no reason for despondency in regarding the prospects of mission work at Banting. The idea of converting adults, whether Dyak, Malay, or Chinese, is perhaps visionary, but

parents show no reluctance to send their children to the schools, though the attendance, as may easily be believed, is by no means regular. At this institution the scholars learn our English and our catechism, studies which contain the whole duty of man as taught at our village schools. Let us trust that in course of time these ignorant savages may acquire the polish and morality so conspicuous among our rural population of Christians.

I ascertained on inquiry that the Dyak children show far less capacity for acquiring knowledge than the Malays; indeed, in most instances, they seem downright stupid. Nevertheless the formation of the head among the Sea tribes is far from defective in the intellectual regions, and the Dyaks show wisdom and shrewdness in the ordinary business of life and in the transactions of their trade. It may be, however, that success in the latter pursuit does not necessarily prove a high general intelligence.

The Dyaks of Banting practise a system of medical treatment which apparently originates from a belief in the principles recognised in the middle ages of Europe under the name of "sympathetic." When a member of the household chances to fall ill, the "manang," instead of employing his cares and skill upon the person of the unfortunate, procures a pig, which he ties down upon a mat, apparelled in the chowat or bedang of the sufferer. He doctors the pig with the most effective charms in his possession, and then—of course it

depends upon circumstances what he does then. The incantations are repeated until the human patient recovers, and upon this happy result the "manang" is rewarded with a gift of the pig, or until the human patient dies, in which case the pig remains as a fee to the manang. Thus the medical faculty, even at Banting, has discovered the advantage of a "hedge."

After breakfasting with Mr. Chambers and visiting his Church, a tiny specimen of wooden Gothic, we re-embarked for Linga. Before we could reach the fort a heavy squall swept down the river, wetting us to the skin in a moment and enveloping the water in a dense mist. These sudden and dangerous squalls are very common at the time of year in which our ill-luck had introduced us to Sarawak. Had not the *Rainbow* been unfortunately injured in passing to Singapore just after we arrived at that town—an accident which detained her two months in dock—we should have reached our destination in the season most suitable both for sport and travel.

Linga fort is a square building constructed of stout logs; each face is pierced with two embrasures armed with small cannon. As usual among the rude strongholds of Sarawak, its only entrance is a window on the first floor, to which access is obtained by means of a ladder. To this fort the Rajah and his officers fled at the first success of the Chinese insurrection, in which

Kuching was captured and burnt, and the fort and Government House destroyed. The Bishop of Labuan and his family, with all the people connected with the Mission, subsequently followed them thither in an open boat. As at Belida, so on this side, the present territory of Rajah Brooke has so far outgrown its original limits, that the importance of Linga as a Government station is now much reduced; a garrison, however, is still maintained there, and the Tuan Mudah occasionally takes up his residence for a while in a little bungalow beside the fort.

At one time the river here had a disagreeable notoriety for the boldness and ferocity of its alligators, but some years since a razzia was made against these horrible reptiles by command of the Tuan Mudah. After the capture of several pronounced innocent by the natives, the real "man-eaters" were identified in the persons of three enormous brutes, whose white skulls are now lying under the floor of the bungalow. Since that time the people of Linga have not been in greater danger on this score than the inhabitants of other river districts.

The natives have a just confidence in the cowardice of these monsters, and care but little for the chance of a meeting with them. Nevertheless they do not emulate the fearlessness of the South American Indians, who, I believe, will bathe in the very midst of an alligator shoal. And in

this caution the people of Borneo are certainly wise; for, though accidents are not common, still they occur with sufficient frequency to induce discretion; and consequently neither Malays nor Dyaks will ever enter deep water when an alligator is positively to be seen. As to the Chinese I never saw them in a river at all, unless when washing their clothes; not that they do not bathe frequently, but it is always at a well, throwing the water over their bodies with a small bucket. I am not sure that the majority of them can swim, and I certainly never saw them practise the exercise.

An amusing story was told us by the Rajah which has already been given to the public by Mr. St. John, in his "Forests of the Far East," but perhaps I may be allowed to repeat it here. Some years ago the alligators in the river Sarawak increased beyond all precedent, and several fatal accidents occurred from their unusual ferocity. One monster in particular, of immense size and singularly malevolent appearance, had been identified as a man-eater by various signs and indications which the Malays recognise, and Captain Brooke, the Rajah Mudah, determined to attempt his capture. Accordingly he went down the river one evening in a small sampan, accompanied by a famous native sportsman, provided with the traps and bait usually employed for the destruction of these reptiles. The haunt of the individual they sought, a little cove bordered with mangroves and

slimy reeds, was well known, and the traps were placed in a position likely to attract his eye. When all was completed, the Malay stood up in the sampan and apostrophised the reptile somewhat in this wise:—"Oh—something—son of a—something—family, come forth from thy foul den and behold me! Listen to my words, you hideous old humbug! Come out that I may pierce you with my spear, and bear your head in triumph through the campong! You daren't, you cowardly beast! You destroyer of women and cattle! May your——" At this moment the water surged up over the sampan's side, and a hideous head, rough with green scales, appeared on the surface not six feet from the speaker's face. Without a word he dropped into his seat and paddled vigorously from the spot. Captain Brooke himself felt nervous, for one touch of the monster's tail would have upset the frail craft in which they sat; but when the sampan was some hundred yards from the spot he began to rally his comrade on the remarkable difference between his boasts and his actions when the desired opportunity had arrived, and the Malay, having recovered his presence of mind, defended himself on the ground of the sudden surprise. He then stood up again in the bows, and once more addressed the monster—"Oh, you beast! I knew your cowardly and malignant nature, and was prepared for its exhibition, but such utter absence of all decency and proper feeling I could not have

anticipated. For this my vengeance on your foul carcass shall be doubled, and the shame of it shall dwell on your progeny for ever. Your family will I extirpate, and I will spit upon you—something—something—I will——" Again the water boiled up, and again the villanous green eyes glared horribly into his. For a moment the man stood paralysed, then, with a movement of abject terror, he threw himself down in the boat, and, with white lips, commenced a string of prayers and protestations, which he continued mechanically as long as they were on the water. And indeed the coincidence might have startled less superstitious nerves than his.

The day after our visit to Banting, the Tuan Mudah and I left Linga in the *Venus*, and in three days reached Kuching. The weather was rough and stormy, and our loose articles of toilette suffered considerably; some crockery also perished in an abrupt attempt to "turn turtle," devised by the vessel as a pleasant surprise to us, but frustrated by the amazing presence of mind displayed by Capt. Lucas and everyone else on board; in other respects the voyage was satisfactory. I and my gem-like Paham took up our solitary residence in the bungalow, where my servant amused himself all day with singing a falsetto song, beginning "Din-dang ber-dindang." For my own part, I finished my sketches, collected our skins and curiosities, paid visits, and awaited Arthur's return from Sèribas.

CHAPTER XI.

Bornean Slavery—Lanun Pirates—S'Ali—Tenacity of Life among Orientals — Exploit of Paham — Flower-snake — Government of Seribas—Defeat of Mr. Brereton at Sakarrah —Removal of the Malay Datus—First Invasion of Seribas by the Tuan Mudah—Second Invasion—Repulse at Sadok—Murder of Fox and Steele—Support of the Rebels by the Governor of Labuan—General Outbreak on the Seribas—Successful Operations of Mr. Watson—Third Invasion by the Tuan Mudah—Evacuation of Sepuk—Retirement of Seribas Rebels to Sadok—Second Siege of Muka—Third Attack on Sadok—Surrender of the Seribas Rebels—Storming of Sadok —Pacification of the Rivers—Our Departure from Sarawak.

THE condition of the slave in Borneo is by no means deplorable. We always found a difficulty in distinguishing the servile portion of a household from the freeborn population, and the honours and distinctions open to the latter class are likewise accessible to the former. The Kennowit chieftain Joke, of whom I have spoken in a previous chapter, was born a slave, and remains so, I believe, to this moment; nevertheless, he has been elected to preside over a considerable clan, and is followed to the field by a hundred free warriors. And although the case of a slave in possession of such power and distinction as this is necessarily rare, personal merit and bravery will carry a Dyak of any

origin to the very highest positions attainable in a community so democratic.*

Hereditary rank is very little regarded among them in comparison with actual superiority. Should a brave warrior beget a valiant son, the latter is looked upon with the more respect for the sake of his father's glory, but the unworthy scion of ten renowned generations will be readily ousted in favour of a low-born hero. The claims of descent have their weight in the contention of two equally meritorious warriors, but they can neither shield the coward nor gain respect for the unworthy.

The Malays, too, though more observant of ancestral claims, are kind and considerate to their slaves. Among the many remarkable features of Sulu and Lanun piracy, not the least noticeable is their treatment of prisoners. As soon as these unfortunates are securely lodged in the island fastnesses of Sulu, they are properly cared for and tolerably treated; but the unutterable cruelties gratuitously practised by these fearful pirates while upon the high seas are more incomprehensible than any subsequent kindness. Capt. Lucas, the commander of the *Venus*, had a Lanun body servant, captured when quite young from one of the roving squadrons of his nation, and now grown into a handsome and intelligent youth. The stories told by this boy, when first taken, of the cruelties he

* This observation does not apply to marriage, in which a taint of servile blood, though incurred generations back, will outweigh the highest personal qualities.

had witnessed on board his father's vessel were most horrible. One favourite torture, inflicted solely for the diversion of the fierce Lanun rovers, was the drenching of a captive with sea water until the wretch became delirious with thirst and agony, in which condition he was set to paddle in the sun, and kept at the work till he dropped from the seat senseless and dying. It is not the Lanun custom under any circumstances to allow fresh water to their male captives, and very rarely to the female. As the victims die, their bodies are tossed overboard, and fresh captives supply their places. When the piratical squadron is in danger of an attack from a European force, the male and female prisoners are instantly slain, nor do the rovers' own children escape. Capt. Lucas's servant only preserved his life by leaping overboard to the English boats.

Nevertheless the Lanun character has qualities which appear to elevate it above the level of other Malay races. There are several slave boys belonging to this nation in Kuching who certainly contrast favourably with the native population. Though their height is not superior nor their limbs more powerful than those of Sarawak Malays, yet the countenance of those we saw was much more prepossessing, and their expression was more animated and agreeable. One of them, named S'Ali, enlisted in our boat's crew at Santubong, where his sharp laugh and ready impertinence caused us continual amusement, and earned him many a good-natured cuff from the slower Malays. S'Ali could not cer-

tainly have been more than twelve or thirteen years of age, yet, for several days after a hurried visit we paid to Kuching, this precocious little Don Juan displayed a very black eye inflicted with a fagot by an inappreciative beauty. The Malay girls are not distinguished for modesty, but a line *must* be drawn somewhere.

Once upon a time S'Ali selected a tall "Kling" as the butt of his impertinent wit, and the "Kling," unable to contend in words, very properly boxed his ears. The little Lanun resented this insult most bitterly; but, inasmuch as his utmost stretch would not have reached the Hindoo's shoulder, he was reduced to seek revenge in conspiracy. All the Lanun slave boys in Kuching were summoned to a "pachara," in which S'Ali passionately detailed the insult he had suffered. A plot of vengeance was at once devised, and on a subsequent evening, as the tall Kling was passing inoffensively to his campong, he was attacked by the confederates on every side, overpowered by numbers, and overthrown. He fell like a tower of jet, and his Lilliputian enemies danced a war-dance upon his body. Since this signal vindication of the Lanun honour, the householders of Kuching have been still more respectful to the little tyrants whom they claim as slaves.

The grown Lanun warriors, sixteen in number, captured in the engagement with the *Rainbow*,* in

* This was the engagement in which Dr. Macdougal, Bishop of Labuan, made himself and Mr. Terry's rifle equally notorious.

May, 1862, and subsequently executed* at Kuching, met their death with a courage, and even gaiety, which excited admiration in the minds of all who witnessed their fate. Sir James Brooke, who was absent from his kingdom at the time, has never ceased to regret the execution of these prisoners, whom he would rather have despatched uninjured to their own islands. Independently of certain horrid circumstances connected with it, the execution was, *in his opinion*, quite useless as a deterrent to the surviving pirates, while the release of the captives might *possibly* have inclined their nation to give up a practice so repugnant to the feelings of humanity, and now so dangerous to all engaged therein.

That the Lanun squadrons did not put to sea in the year 1863 is more to be attributed probably to their actual loss of men in the engagement than to any terror inspired by the fate of their friends, and their warriors have openly threatened an extension of piracy on a still more ruthless system. Last year they again swept down the coasts of Borneo and the islands, returning safely with their booty and captives. But so far as Sarawak is concerned, the rovers have as yet given it a wide berth, though their menaces are more particularly directed against that territory, and when the Rajah's new war-steamer reaches her destination, the piracy of the Lanuns and Sulus, at least on

* Fourteen only were executed. Two were reprieved on account of their youth.

this side, may be suppressed, as has been that of Seribas and Sakarran. Nevertheless an institution of such antiquity, so blended with the interests and feelings of a warlike people, cannot easily be uprooted.

An extraordinary story illustrating the tenacity of life so noticeable among the natives of the farther East, is told by the gentlemen who were on board the *Venus* at the engagement I have referred to. After the action the vessel lay to, and the wounded of both parties were attended by the Bishop. Accommodation was scanty, and many were stretched out on deck, among them an old pirate whose injuries were pronounced mortal. As evening came on, the deck was washed and the wounded were carried below. The old pirate, however, appeared to be quite dead, and his body, with others, was launched overboard from the bows just as darkness set it. Conceive the horror and amazement of Captain Lucas on the ensuing morning, when, on ascending the companion at dawn, he found this identical old Lanun stretched at full length on the quarter-deck. How he had climbed on board again was never explained, for he had certainly been dead some hours when discovered.

While I remained in the capital waiting for Arthur, my spangled servant, Paham, succeeded in creating a very considerable sensation. He went out one evening along the Church Road, and after passing the house of Mr. Houghton, the Treasurer, sent a boy to that gentleman's body-servant with a

challenge to him to bring his sabre and fight it out. As Mr. Houghton's boy had the slightest possible acquaintance with my spangled Paham, he naturally felt astonishment at the invitation, but though such combats of "outre-vaillance" have now become very rare in Kuching, and the boy knew the offence could not be overlooked by the law, his honour was touched on a point very tender with the Malay—indeed with most Englishmen also—so he cheerily fastened on his sabre and sallied out. He looked up and down the road, but Paham was not to be seen; then he walked round the house, but my servant could not be found; then he marched all the length of the road as far as the thick block of jungle haunted by the ghosts of the Lanun warriors, and by pigs of abnormal magnitude which constantly cross the ride of certain residents in Kuching, but neither here was Paham to be found, and the boy at length realized that he was chaffed. Perhaps after all he did not really feel so much disappointment and indignation as he thought proper to assume.

About ten days after our arrival in Kuching, my brother interrupted our after-dinner sitting by his unexpected appearance. He had been most fortunate in his voyage from the mouth of the Batang Lupar to Maritabas, running in a few hours the distance which had occupied us in the Arab's vessel for nearly two days. He brought with him a number of trophies and curiosities; among them some serpent skins of great beauty. One of these

reptiles, a "flower-snake," he had endeavoured to preserve alive, but it was found too troublesome. This species is a favourite with the natives, and very easily tamed. Its back is as green as the scales of the emerald lizard which infests the forest trees, and a bright yellow stripe marks either side. Unlike those of most reptiles, the scales of the flower-snake preserve much of their brilliancy after the skin is removed, and Arthur's specimen resembled a gay riband.

Even among those of Sarawak the path from Sakarran to Seribas has a terrible notoriety. The distance between the two forts is some twelve miles, but a portion of the route can be traversed by water;—indeed upon such a day as Mr. Stuart Johnson and my brother selected for their journey the whole distance was almost navigable. If the "batangs," be uncomfortable when the tropical sun is pouring his fierce rays on the traveller's head, still more are they objectionable when a thunder-storm has made their surface as slippery as glass, and reduced the miserable wanderer to the consistency of blotting-paper. Nevertheless the two Englishmen, accompanied by a numerous troop of fortmen and servants, faced the difficulties and dangers of the route with much fortitude and vituperation.

When* Sir James Brooke first acquired the king-

* For the following historical sketch of Seribas I am indebted to Walter Watson, Esq., the first European who ever ruled this

dom of Sarawak, the Dyaks inhabiting the Seribas and Batang Lupar rivers, who had long been the terror of neighbouring coasts, were governed by a prudent old chief entitled the Orang Kaya Pamantuah. In time of war the control of this chieftain was paramount over his own people, and in peace his influence and authority were very rarely disputed. But the nominal command of the Seribas forces, whether for a foray on land or sea, was always given to the three Malay chieftains who were professedly answerable to Sarawak for the good behaviour of the Dyak population. These nobles lived each in his own town upon a different branch of the Seribas river;—the Rembas stream was under the Datu Bandar;—the Paku under the Datu Laxamana;—and the main river under the Datu Pattinggi. These hereditary nobles received the Dyak revenue and administered the domestic government each in his own district.* They invariably accompanied the Dyaks in their boats,† and their assistance was invaluable to the piratical warriors

piratical population, and who still retains the post of Resident among them under Sir James Brooke.

* All the Sea Tribes, and the Seribas among their number, were under the nominal control of the Malay Governors, equally with the Hill people; being, however, a much stronger race in numbers, and led by such men as the Pamantuah, they were very apt to bully their masters. Still they always paid them a certain revenue, though, on occasion, they retook the money by a general fine on the Malay population.

† The war-boats of the Seribas contain from thirty to sixty men. Those of the Sakarran and Rejang are still larger.

from their knowledge of fire-arms and ability to procure ammunition; in the distribution of the plunder the Malays claimed and received the larger share of captives and valuables, while the Dyaks secured all the heads.

It will easily be believed that the Datus regarded with profound disgust any attempt to destroy a system so admirably adapted to their interests; they yielded to their allies that part of the booty which they had no desire to retain, and took out their own share in solid valuables. Therefore, although the Orang Kaya Pamantuah, who was a wise and sagacious ruler, succeeded to a great extent in preserving peace with Sarawak during his life, his death was no sooner announced than the Malay Datus commenced an agitation among the Seribas Dyaks.

At this time the most powerful chiefs of the Sakarran and Batang Lupar rivers were the Orang Kayas Gasing, and Rentab. The former (who is still alive, and who entertained us most hospitably, as I have already related), though a brave and renowned warrior, was too intelligent not to appreciate the advantages of peaceful intercourse with Sarawak, but Rentab was a bitter enemy to the Rajah. This chief appears to have possessed great aptitude for the Dyak system of warfare, which usually consists of a dash, a surprise, and a bloody victory, or, if the resistance be too strenuous, a hasty but organised retreat to some stockade

previously erected for the purpose. During the many years that Rentab combated Sir James Brooke's power, he repulsed several large expeditions sent against him, while his aggressive movements were frequently successful.

The disturbances were commenced by this chief in an attack upon Sakarran, then under the government of Mr. Brereton. That gentleman, after repulsing the attack on the fort, unfortunately pursued Rentab's force upon the river, and in the engagement Mr. Lee, who acted under his orders, lost his life. The boat in which Mr. Brereton himself fought was swamped in the rout, but his crew preserved his life by diving with him and carrying him under the water. Shortly after this success, Rentab retired to the top of Sadok, the highest mountain of the district, where he repulsed a large expedition sent against him in retaliation.

Leaving, for the moment, this Sakarran chief in undisturbed possession of his stronghold, the Rajah turned his attention to the Seribas river, which was now in a dangerous state of disturbance. Feeling convinced that the Malay Datus were the prime cause of this agitation, the suppression of which was the most important part of their duty to him, the Rajah determined on the bold step of transplanting them with all the inhabitants of their towns to a site within more convenient reach of his authority. They were accordingly removed to the

mouth of the main river, where they built the present town of Seribas.

After this proof of the boldness and determination of the government, the country was quiet for some months. At the end of that time, however, indubitable intelligence was brought to Sarawak that Si Hadgi, one of the younger sons* of the Orang Kaya Pamantuah, who had inherited a considerable portion of his father's influence, was openly preparing a large Dyak force with the purpose of going to sea on a piratical foray. This proceeding, which was notoriously encouraged by the Malay Datus, rendered the construction of a fort in some commanding position in the midst of the Dyak territory an act of public necessity, and with that object, Mr. Charles Johnson, the Tuan Mudah, who at Mr. Brereton's death from fever had succeeded him in the government of the Sakarran district, entered the Seribas river with a powerful Sakarran force, supported by some heavy boats from Sarawak. The enemy's plans were completely overthrown by this timely invasion, and a temporary fort was raised about seventy miles up the main river, in a position commanding a great stretch of water. This erection was placed under the govern-

* I have already remarked that primogeniture is by no means a law of Dyak inheritance. It will be seen that at Si Hadji's death his eldest brother succeeded him, having been overlooked at first in consideration of the superior merit shown by the younger brother.

ment of Mr. Watson, assisted by Mr. J. B. Cruickshank, the present able Resident of Kennowit.

Immediately after the departure of the Tuan Mudah and his forces, Si Hadji descended the river to attack the newly raised fort, but his meditated surprise was anticipated, and after the loss of a few warriors killed and wounded, he retired. A large force was collected from all parts of Rajah Brooke's dominions, each contingent led by its respective governing officer, and the Rajah Mudah assumed the supreme command. After various desultory engagements between portions of the contending forces, Si Hadji made a stand, and was killed at the first discharge. After his death his disorganized warriors were disheartened, and for the first time in history the upper watershed of the Seribas river was overrun by an enemy.

After this success, Rentab was attacked for the second time in his stronghold on the top of Sadok, and the assaulting force had every hope of victory, assisted as they were by the novel terror of a small mortar brought up for this purpose. But the shells failed to penetrate the well-constructed roof of Rentab's stockade, and a gun captured by him on the Sakarran, in his engagement with Mr. Brereton, was so placed as effectually to sweep the narrow ridge by which an assaulting force must mount. From dawn to sunset the attack was maintained, and during that time the fire was very hot. Finding success unattainable, except at an immense sacrifice

of life, and doubtful even on those terms, the Sarawak force withdrew, and for some time longer Rentab was left in undisturbed possession of his independence.

The victories, however, upon the Seribas were productive of valuable results. The greater part of the population inhabiting the upper waters of that river, including Nannang, the eldest son of the Orang Kaya Pamantuah, tendered their submission to the Rajah, and were favourably heard.

For many months after the death of Si Hadgi, his brother Nannang, who, though far inferior in courage and sagacity, had succeeded to much of his influence and authority, maintained a show of peace upon the banks of the Seribas streams. The fines exacted from his portion of the rebellious populations were raised without difficulty, and divided, as is customary, among the chiefs who had retained their allegiance to the Rajah. The Dyaks began to frequent the head-quarters of their district, and commenced a system of orderly trade with the Chinese and other merchants, who, in consideration of immense profits, were enterprising enough to resort thither at the imminent risk of their lives. Nannang, also, and his people, took an apparently cheerful share in the task of providing wood and materials for the construction of a new and more extensive fort to be raised in a more central position. Meanwhile, however, Si Loyo, the son of the old Pamantuah next in age to Nannang, who

governed a considerable district on the upper waters of the Seribas, still remained among the hills, scarcely concealing his hostility under a transparent pretence of personally collecting the fines due from his rebellious subjects.

At this time, Serib* Musahore, of Serikei, in the Rejang country, was organizing an extensive conspiracy to overthrow the Rajah's government, and the Dyak chiefs of Seribas had arranged to bear an important part in the execution of the project. The mode of attaining their object, approved by Musahore and his fellows, was the simultaneous murder of every government officer in each district throughout the territory, and the success which attended a premature outbreak at Kennowit, where Messrs. Fox and Steele, the Resident and Assistant-Resident of the Rejang, were assassinated before the slightest rumour of impending disturbances had reached their ears, shows that if the secret had been communicated to fewer heads, and the people of Kennowit had been less impatient, the success of the plot would scarcely have been doubtful.

When this cowardly murder had given the government a first warning of the imminent danger in which it stood, convincing proof of the complicity

* Serib or Shereef is the title assumed by the Arab descendants of the Prophet, of whom there are great numbers in Borneo.—In fact, most of those who can claim any Arab blood at all assert their relationship to Mahomet, wear the turban of sacred green, and demand the reverence of all true believers, which is readily granted to them.

of the Dyak chiefs of Seribas was soon obtained. When Serib Musahore (who, it must be allowed, was never actually convicted of planning the Kennowit murders, though his guilt can scarcely be considered doubtful) was driven from his towns of Serikei and Igan, and retired hastily to fortify himself among his adherents at Mukah, Loyo became his open and avowed ally, assisting him with provisions, and spreading through the length and breadth of the Sea Dyak territory every report their joint ingenuity could devise calculated to exalt their own power and success, and to shake the confidence of the Rajah's party in his will and ability to support them.

Meanwhile the Rajah Mudah lost no time in calling out the population still loyal, and siege was laid to Mukah with the full knowledge and consent of the Sultan of Bruni, to whom that territory belonged. After a month of severe fighting, and the endurance of much fatigue and exposure, Captain Brooke, the Rajah Mudah, obtained possession of the place, but while the loyal party were congratulating themselves on this happy result of their labours and danger, the Hon. Mr. Edwards, H.M. Governor of Labuan, and acting as Consul-general, thought proper, for reasons of his own, to pounce down upon Mukah in a man-of-war, to support with his influence, and, if necessary, with the artillery of his vessel, the actual murderers of British subjects who were accompanying the forces of Serib

Musahore. Capt. Brooke, having neither the wish nor the power to resist Mr. Edwards'* menaces, unreasonable and irritating as they were, was compelled to retire with his forces, and it will readily be believed that the numerous Seribas Dyaks who had fought by the side of Serib Musahore at Mukah did not fail on their return home to recount with exultation how the representative of the Queen of England had placed a squadron at the service of the Serib and his band of assassins. Moreover, drawing a little on their imaginations, they asserted that with this timely assistance the rebels had utterly defeated the Sarawak forces, and that the heads of Mr. Charles Johnson, the Tuan Mudah, Mr. Watson, their Resident, and Mr. J. B. Cruickshank, assistant to the latter, had been sent to Rentab, at Sadok, to be placed in security.

The effect of such a report, with many a detail and fanciful illustration added by each narrator, disseminated among an excitable people only half subdued and longing to resume their piratical habits, may be easily imagined. Nannang openly joined his brother, and carried with him to the enemy all the population whom he had brought over to the Rajah the previous year, and some additional numbers. With this following he built a fort at the junction of the Sepuk branch with the main

* For his conduct upon this occasion Mr. Edwards was censured by the English Government, and superseded in his Governorship of Labuan.

Seribas stream about a day and a half's journey above the Government fort. When Mr. Watson returned to his post at the sudden termination of the Mukah campaign, he found that an assembly of chief men had been convened at the house of one of the Malay Datus, at which the question was openly moved whether the Malays, and that part of the Dyak population hitherto friendly to the Rajah, should not go over to the enemy in a body. Only one Malay of rank and one Dyak chief declined to attend this meeting, which, though highly improper and calculated to render void all the success hitherto attained, cannot be wondered at, nor, perhaps, be fairly reprehended. However well these chiefs may have been formerly affected to the Rajah's person and government, and however they may have regretted his overthrow, if, through the co-operation of H.B.M.'s ships with the enemy, he became incapable of affording protection to those who remained true to him—and the natives had every reason to believe that such was the case—the sooner they were in the field with propositions of peace and alliance with the rebels the better their chance of obtaining favourable terms.

Nevertheless, on the re-appearance of Mr. Watson, whom they had supposed dead and decapitated, they took heart again, and manfully answered his call when he announced his immediate resolution of attacking the enemy's stockade. Within five days of his arrival the loyal warriors had assembled to

the number of 2000, and were prepared to ascend the river with him.

Nannang and his followers were found on a tongue of land formed by the junction of the Sepuk river with the main stream, in a position impenetrable to artillery in the front, but commanded on either side by higher ground. These flanking positions, however, were under the range of the Dyak artillery, and the long grass and brushwood was thickly planted with bamboo spikes, terrible to a barefooted antagonist, and difficult to uproot. This duty, however, was eventually performed under a heavy fire, and Mr. Watson got his guns into position within forty yards of the building, in a situation for which Nannang was not in the least prepared. Just before sundown the rebels, who were quite unable to sustain so close a fire for any length of time, hoisted a white flag, and asked permission to evacuate the position with their killed and wounded. No difficulty was raised about the concession of these easy terms on account of the near relationship of the opposing parties, and the friendly feeling existent between them.

Of all the picturesque sights which it has been his good fortune to witness, Mr. Watson describes this capitulation as the most striking. The wild mountain scenery around lay red and hazy in the light of the setting sun; the faint mists of evening curled up over the painted timbers of the great war boats on the river; in front was the rude but mas-

sive stockade, by the door of which stood the herald in his gaudy dress, waving the white flag and gesticulating his amity, but timorously prepared to dart through the open door at the first sign of treachery. Behind were the guns from which the smoke of the last discharge still slowly curled, and the naked hill above was alive with armed men; the crimson sunlight sparkled from point to point over a thousand spears, as the scattered groups of warriors swayed to and fro in their excitement. The parti-coloured sarongs and gay jackets of the Malays were conspicuous on every side, and the brown limbs of the Dyaks were concealed by their great painted shields, from which fluttered a hundred scalps. Such were the surroundings of Nannang's capitulation. The herald screamed his terms; Mr. Watson assented; a hum of approbation rose from those within hearing, while the more distant body still yelled defiance.

When evening fell the evacuation was completed. At midnight the stockade was fired, and as the expedition returned down the river, it blazed like a great bonfire of triumph, and proclaimed the victory throughout the country side.

But in a very few days intelligence was brought to the fort that these restless insurgents were building another stockade, larger and stronger, in precisely the same spot as that just destroyed. Upon the receipt of this news, Mr. Watson applied for aid to the Tuan Mudah, who had just returned to

Sakarran, and that gentleman soon came over in person, accompanied by some thousands of warriors from the Butang Lupar district, including a force of Undup and Balow Dyaks who had always been deadly enemies of the Seribas. A council was immediately held, and a joint plan of action arranged; the Tuan Mudah was to march overland, destroying any fortifications he might discover, and finally to descend on Sepuk, at which place Mr. Watson, who ascended the river with the entire Seribas party, would probably have already arrived. After persevering for a few hours, however, the Tuan Mudah was compelled by increasing illness to return to the fort, while his ballah or war-party pressed on under the command of Abong Aing, the Malay chief of Sakarran. On the third day the two parties united under Mr. Watson's command, and the Sepuk fort was surrounded, but the guns were too light to make any effectual impression, and recent experience had taught the enemy the weak points of his position. An express boat was accordingly despatched to Seribas to bring up a heavy gun with ammunition. This the Tuan Mudah prepared to send with all speed, and his intention was to accompany it in person; but on this night, just after dark, a tremendous storm of wind and rain set in, and lasted an hour, during which Nannang and his garrison stole out from the place. It was known that the evacuation was progressing, and that the enemy, in several divisions and in different direc-

tions, was making his way through the besieging force, but the darkness was so intense and the tempest so violent that musket and sword were rendered alike useless. Some of the wilder Dyaks cut and hacked at random on every side, and many were wounded of both parties, but whether by friends or foes was quite uncertain. Nannang showed wisdom in thus profiting by the opportune assistance of the elements. His provisions could not long have fed the immense garrison he had collected, and his position was entirely surrounded. By day, or on any ordinary night, he could not have escaped without great slaughter; and the besieging force was not, as on former occasions, composed of his own friends and connexions, but of his hereditary enemies and deadly foes, the Undup and Balow Dyaks. To surrender to these would indeed have been a desperate resource.

When the storm had subsided, the moon shone out brightly, and by her light the land party cut up the fort into rafts which, as fast as they were finished, were loaded with men and launched upon the stream. Mr. Watson remained behind with the Seribas boats to protect the retirement of the Batang Lupar forces. Next morning the scene upon the river and its banks was curious enough. The Dyaks of Sakarran and Balow, accustomed to embark in all sorts of frail craft, managed their rafts with ease and safety, some of them even constructing a roof to protect them from the sun; but

the greater number, Undups and such non-aquatic people, had a miserable time of it. The banks of the river were lined with discomforted navigators, and only by cramming the Seribas boats could they be got along. Most of them had lost their arms and all their possessions when the rafts capsized, and the satirical remarks of their more fortunate friends did not tend to enliven their despondency.

After this second failure, Nannang and Loyo gave up all thoughts of maintaining their resistance on the low ground, and they fell back together upon Sadok, where the old Sakarran chief, Rentab, still lay, resting on his hard-won laurels, but no longer inclined to measure his strength against the Rajah's young officers—the Tuan Mudah and Mr. Watson. His indignation and disgust were accordingly expressed with some vigour when the two sons of the Pamantuah signified to him their intention of settling on his hill; but might was on the invaders' side, and they built houses for all the colony in front of his fort, which was perched like an eagle's nest upon the summit of the ridge.

At this time the attention of the Rajah and his officers was occupied by the second expedition against Mukah, in preparation for which Sir James Brooke had ordered out from England a small armed steamer, the *Rainbow*, now carrying the mails, a number of heavy guns, and all other appliances necessary for the overthrow of Serib Musahore. By this coincidence of events Nannang and his

people were permitted to make their farms upon the mountain-side, and to profess their hostility without reply. Next year, however, Serib Musa-hore surrendered and accepted his sentence of banishment. Thus released from more pressing duty, the Tuan Mudah determined to attempt a third attack upon Sadok.

Knowing that small guns were quite useless against a position so impregnable by nature and so well defended, a 12-pounder howitzer was cast in Sarawak weighing nine or ten cwt.; and the forces of the Batang Lupar and the loyal Seribas again rendezvoused at Mr. Watson's fort. The howitzer was got on board with a large supply of ammunition and shell-rockets, and the *Ballah* started up the river, under the command of the Tuan Mudah, assisted by Mr. Watson, Mr. J. B. Cruickshank, and Sergeant Lees.

For two days the force pushed on in their boats, but on the third day the stream became too shallow to admit the passage of such large craft. A fort was accordingly built at the point where the force landed, and the boats were left there under the charge of a Malay garrison. The remainder of the *Ballah* set out on foot, and for two days more they followed the course of the river, sometimes walking in the water, sometimes cutting off an angle by climbing the precipitous hills through which it makes its way, and striking its bed again on the other side. Bad as Bornean travel always is, no

sort of walking can be so difficult as this. The path is only wide enough for one to pass at a time, and each man as he leaves the river to climb the bank carries upon his limbs a quantity of water, which drips down upon the steep path and renders the clayey soil as slippery as ice.

Upon this expedition a body of Chinese coolies were for the first time enlisted in the service of a Dyak force, but although the greatest care was exercised in the selection of sound and powerful men, the experiment failed utterly. It had been supposed that the greater strength and size of the Chinese porter would enable him to carry ammunition and baggage more safely and rapidly, but it was found that, in consequence of his clumsiness and lack of activity, his superior powers were of comparatively little avail. One by one the coolies succumbed to fatigue and despondency; some even sat down by the roadside, crying like children, and refusing to move, others, with the cool recklessness characteristic of the race when in a difficult or dangerous position, silently lightened their burden by dropping the shot or shell one by one into the water whenever the opportunity was afforded them by an increased depth. When this was discovered their loads were taken from them and restored to the slighter but more wiry Dyaks.

However, upon the second day the river was found to be so reduced in volume as to be no longer navigable, even by the small canoe in which

the howitzer had hitherto been carried, and it was then mounted upon a field carriage and transported overland. The coolies now became really useful in making a road for the gun with the large hoes they had brought with them.

On the evening of the fifth day the gun was attached to long and strong ropes, and the coolie labour was tested. From the water's edge to the top of the first ridge the height was about 300 feet, and the cliff was so steep that a European, even with empty hands, found difficulty in climbing it. Nothing less than hundreds of Dyaks were required to move the gun. Great was the delight and loud the cheers when it actually got in motion, and louder still they rose when it reached its first night's resting-place on the top of the ridge. The greater part of the ensuing day it advanced by the same method, until, towards evening, the route crossed some farm grounds, where large trees were felled across the path. Here the gun was dismounted and carried bodily, slung on to a long piece of wood, upon the shoulders of men. This work was made harder by the turns and windings of the path, which rendered it impossible for all to walk in the beaten track, and the long grass and undergrowth on either side were strewn with spikes by the enemy. On the second day it was difficult to find volunteers for the work, and nothing but the example of the chiefs and men of rank, who all in turn put their shoulders

to the gun, kept the hearts of the Dyaks from despair. The progress was slow and laborious; after three long days the top of the second ridge was reached, and here it was determined to encamp, and, if possible, open communication with the enemy. The two camps were separated by scarcely half a mile of altitude, but the ascent was almost perpendicular, and the movements of the enemy in their aerial forts could be plainly seen. A messenger was despatched, offering a safe-conduct to Nannang or Loyo, if either of them would descend for a personal interview, and on the following day the former made his appearance. He frankly admitted that they were all taken by surprise, never having conceived the possibility of so large a gun being brought against them; their fortifications were unfinished, and their wives and families were all with them. The Tuan Mudah asserted that he had no wish to do them injury if they would live peaceably and abandon those desires of piracy and head-taking which had caused the troubles. As a security for their good faith he required the cession of a number of the large jars upon which the Dyaks place so fabulous a value, and guaranteed their return in three years if the promises were kept. He likewise required the immediate evacuation of their forts at Sadok, and indicated an adjacent ridge for their encampment until his force should have retired.

These terms were gladly accepted; the jars were placed in the Tuan Mudah's hands, and the next

night Nannang and his followers, with all their families, were quietly sleeping on an open ridge within a few hundred yards of their deadly and hereditary foes. The implicit and reverential confidence of the Dyaks in the honour and power of Rajah Brooke and his officers was strikingly illustrated on this occasion. By the customs of Seribas warfare the word passed for the safety of the capitulating force would only be binding until it was at the mercy of the stronger party, and thousands of fierce Balows awaited the signal of massacre with desperate longing. But the Tuan Mudah's word was passed, and both parties had confidence in it. So intense is the regard of even the wildest Dyaks for that leader, that none ventured to disobey his commands, and the ancient enemies lay almost side by side until the retirement of the government forces.

The end of Rentab's not inglorious struggle is soon told. He still put his trust in the natural defences of his position, until the howitzer was dragged up the cliff by main force, and resistance then became hopeless. The greater part of his property he lost with his house; and the gun which was wont to sweep the only approach fell into the invaders' hands, together with a number of rifles and other spoils of his victory over Mr. Brereton on the Sakarran river. To Nannang was confided the task of re-transporting the howitzer to Seribas Fort, whither the force returned and dispersed.

In 1863, when their Resident called out the

former pirates of Seribas to join the great "ballah" fitting out to attack the Kyans* on the Upper Rejang, the old rebels responded to a man, and did good service. They have built their houses and made their farms in the vicinity of the Government Fort, and under the rule of Mr. Stuart Johnson, at present in charge of that district, they have become good and peaceful subjects. The hostages given on the top of Sadok have recently been restored to them.

Since the fall of Rentab, and the submission of Nannang, the internal peace of the Sea Dyak countries has not been disturbed.

From this brief outline of the history of the Sea-tribes, it will be observed, that the extent of their coalitions, the vigour of their attack, and the spirited protraction of their resistance, place them far above that savage and barbarous condition in which they have usually been classed. Many instances of generosity, intelligence, and thoughtful patriotism were adduced to us in evidence of a character much removed either from the brutality or recklessness of the savage nature, and we can scarcely doubt that in course of time they will become, under the continuance of Rajah Brooke's judicious government, what might be called in the

* In addition to numerous other acts of lawlessness and aggression, the Kyans had sheltered the two surviving murderers of Messrs. Fox and Steele. One was killed during the war, the other was surrendered at its conclusion.

East a prosperous and enlightened nation of warriors and seamen, perhaps of agriculturists.

I have selected Seribas as an example of the establishment of a Sarawak out-station, partly because its warriors, though few in number,* have always been the bravest and most turbulent of the piratical tribes, partly because I could verify the facts I had gathered about that district more readily than any other; but I would not have the reader think that the Rajah's officers all lead such restless and even dangerous lives as the Tuan Mudah or Mr. Watson. The Residencies of Sarawak are now peaceful enough, and the officers complain rather of stagnation than of perilous enterprise. To Mr. Brereton must be given the honour of first introducing peace and order among the Sea Dyaks from his residence at Sakarran, but since his death the Tuan Mudah, Mr. Watson, Mr. J. B. Cruickshank, and Mr. Stuart Johnson have been enabled to work upon a much more extensive scale.

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After my brother and I had again joined company there was little to detain us in Sarawak. Our curiosity was satisfied, and we had seen with our own eyes that strangest anomaly of the age—a kingdom ruled by a private English gentleman,

* The Seribas Dyaks proper only number 3000 doors, which at the average usually adopted in Sarawak would give them 10,000 warriors of fighting age.

whose independent sovereignty is recognised* by his native land. We had visited the fortified posts of his government, Kuching, Belida, Kennowit, Sakarran, Seribas, Mukah, Linga, and Bintulu; we had lived with his officers, and noted the wild healthy life they lead; we had introduced ourselves to the Borneo Company, and endeavoured to regard the country in its trading aspect; we had watched the practical working of the Missions, and the spread of English civilization; and we were led to the conclusion that, though Sarawak be not the original paradise or Eden, yet it is a country whose residents may be, and usually are, exceedingly happy. That some discontent exists both among Europeans and natives it would be impossible to deny, but the same may be said of every kingdom on earth. The aims of the Government appear liberal, and the country is now prosperous beyond all expectation. The exports of the year ending while we stayed were computed at $2,000,000.

But the ever-recurring difficulty in the way of enterprise is the want of labour. Dyaks will not work, nor Malays. Klings and all Hindoo races are feeble, timid, and inadventurous, nor do they care to leave the towns. The Chinese remain, as good workmen as exist in the world.

But Malays and Dyaks have an aversion to the Celestials, which, in the former case, is reasonable

* Sir James Brooke has been recognised since our return, and Mr. Ricketts has been appointed to Kuching as Consul for the English crown.

enough. Wherever these grotesque immigrants congregate under English protection, they gradually monopolize all the means of life, a proceeding much to their credit, of course, as indicating habits of industry, economy, and so forth, but to which the original possessors of the land entertain a natural objection. And in addition to this dislike of their grasping spirit, the Government and people of Sarawak received a lesson a few years ago which would scarcely give them confidence in the benefit of a large Coolie immigration. Though finally suppressed with terrible severity, the insurrection of the Bow gold-washers was so far successful as to leave in ashes the capital, the public library, Government House, and most of the private residences of Europeans. This experience, with its accompanying slaughter of children and unarmed fugitives, is not encouraging to the advocates of Chinese labour, but no substitute can be procured.

Since the recognition of Rajah Brooke by the English Government, it is difficult to indicate a direction from which danger to his kingdom may be apprehended. Previous to that event the Dutch, who already possess the half of Borneo, never allowed to lapse the claim which they alleged to Sarawak Proper, and one of their governors is reported to have asserted publicly that the death of Sir James Brooke would be the signal for an immediate invasion which his country would be quite incapable of resisting; but the appointment of an English consul has effectually silenced these

menaces, which never appear to have been justified by any legal rights. No other source of peril to the little kingdom has at present developed itself, though the meddling and fanatical spirit of the Hadjis who each year embark for Mecca in greater numbers, may, it is feared by some, eventually bring about dangerous complications, the more especially if, as is advocated, the Government endeavour to reduce the annual numbers.

But the devotion and self-sacrifice evinced by the pilgrims,—even though these feelings be somewhat mingled with hopes of mercantile advantage,—are certainly of a quality to justify some manifestations of respect on the part of those who, from want of enterprise, or of faith, or of means, prefer to remain at home. Any miserable old tea-chest, worm-eaten, dry-rotted, bearing upon her bottom specimens of every marine vegetable, and in her interior every species of tropical pest, whose timbers can be persuaded to hang together in the roads of Singapore is good enough for the Hadjis. When the captain of the *North Wind,* having run his vessel on a rock, succeeded in bringing her back to sink at port, he offered her for sale to one of the native merchants engaged in this line of business. The bargain was satisfactorily completed, but when the captain endeavoured to indicate to the purchaser certain defects which should be remedied before the vessel could go to sea with safety, the worthy native positively refused to hear a syllable about any injury not specified among those incurred by the

actual striking of the vessel. The captain of the *North Wind* came home with me, and was much troubled during the passage about the fate of the luckless Hadjis embarked in his doomed craft.

The trade of Sarawak, like that of Singapore, is absolutely free. No dues or customs whatever are exacted from vessels entering the river, whether European or native, and the good results of this liberality will, no doubt, be shortly apparent. Already, indeed, has the antimony, timber, and sago trade enticed vessels of considerable size to the Moritabas channel, but the present* situation of the capital is not favourable to the approach of large vessels. When H.M.S.S. *Pantaloon* entered the river during our visit she grounded twice, firstly, off Government House; secondly, in descending the stream on her return. But the tolls paid by merchant vessels at most Eastern ports, especially those pertaining to the French and Spanish colonies, are so unreasonably heavy, and the official technicalities so confusing and ridiculous, that, when trade becomes more abundant and regular, merchants and captains will find their comfort and interest alike advantaged by the loading of their return cargoes at Sarawak.

With regard to the barbarous custom of head-

* A project for removing the town to the mouth of the Sarawak river has long been in contemplation, and will probably be carried out at no distant day. It is not, however, designed to change the site of Government House or of the Treasury.

hunting, formerly carried to a pitch so incredible among the Sea Dyaks, I believe the philanthropists of England may congratulate humanity upon its final overthrow. This end has been effected, not by an uncompromising assault upon the feelings which induced the collection of such trophies, but, by the steady enunciation of the principle that the subjects of Rajah Brooke cannot be permitted to kill one another except in open war declared by the sovereign himself. Thus gradually, but firmly discouraged, the practice is rapidly falling into disuse, and even those heads fairly taken in the late Kyan war did not seem, as we were told, to be regarded with the religious exultation formerly exhibited on such occasions. Nevertheless, the zeal of a missionary indiscreetly attacking the Dyaks upon this subject might still cause dangerous disturbances; a truth of which the Government very nearly had practical testimony upon a recent occasion.

And perhaps if the question be removed from the domain of good taste to that of logical consistency, the Dyak warrior glorying in the blackened skull of an enemy loyally slain will not appear to the unprejudiced mind more brutal or inhuman than the European soldier who adorns his breast with the hard-earned cross or medal. If the latter trophy be a tribute worthily paid to valour and patriotism, the former is a far more palpable proof of similar qualities. It may be urged that the one distinction was gained in a worthy struggle for an

adequate object, but such honours are surely conferred for the absolute risk of life and limb, quite irrespective of the justice or necessity of the *causa belli*; and when the tenderness towards non-combatants characteristic of modern hostilities, at least in Europe, is considered, it must, I think, be admitted that the warfare of the Dyak who looks forward, if vanquished, to inevitable death as his own portion, and foreign slavery as the lot of all he loves, can be more readily justified than the less reasonable struggles of the civilized world. At least I feel confident that many minds will cheerfully admit a degree of barbarism so dense as not to recognise any effective distinction between the two cases tending to the advantage of the Christian.

But in regard to the eventual civilization of this manly and interesting race opinions are much divided. Reason, observation, and general experience* seem to argue conclusively that the Dyaks will never be brought to adopt that unreasoning belief in gold, and selfishness, and varnish, which we Europeans are accustomed to call comfort, and reason, and refinement; but on the other hand the Milanowe Dyaks of Mukah already are scarcely distinguishable from Malays in their mode of life and trading impulses. These people, however, never

* It would, indeed, be difficult to indicate a people profiting to any considerable extent by our introduction of these blessings who did not possess them in a certain degree before our arrival. Experience seems to show that a barbarous race can never be reclaimed by the exhibition of those advantages which will stimulate a semi-civilized people.

enjoyed a high reputation for bravery or enterprise, and their partial civilization may be accounted for by their proximity to the sea-coast, and consequent intermarriage with the Malay emigrants.

The conclusion which the Government officers of Sarawak appear individually to hold is, that the Dyak population, constituting a majority of Rajah Brooke's subjects, may, and under the present judicious system will, eventually acquire a position more elevated in the scale of humanity, but can never be civilized in the European sense of the expression.

After my brother's return from Seribas, we began to make our preparations for departure. The large sampan, or boat, we presented with all its fittings to Ali Kasut,* who had discharged the duties of his responsible station as interpreter and general guardian of our interests in a manner worthy his high reputation as protector of the griffins. His complexion of brownish-green fairly became unctuous with delight when he realized that the magnificent craft he had steered so often from island to island beneath the green peak of Santubong, and through the hot, silent river-reaches under shadow of vast forest trees, or between quivering belts of

* "Kasut" signifies "shoes." Ali was distinguished from his innumerable namesakes by the practice of wearing such articles, which are not commonly affected by Orientals. Ali possessed two or three pair made of black English leather, without which he was never visible.

mangrove and nipa-palm, was actually and absolutely his property. Visions of trade with the simple Dyaks at a profit of 1000 per cent. formed themselves into a dazzling picture before his eyes; a hundred Malay pleasures became tangible in the near future, and possibly the wealth and influence of a real Nikodah* showed themselves at the end of the vista, with, maybe, half a dozen honestly purchased wives, and a steeple-crowned residence like that of the uxorious merchant at Muka.

To our other servants we distributed various backsheesh. Paham came out in a manner more spangled than ever by the addition of a mauve scarf wrapped round his waist, and silk neckties disposed generally about his person; but my brother's "boy," Ali Kechil, or little Ali, with an amount of self-abnegation rarely found among Malays in the matter of personal adornment, carried away his scarfs and ornaments to deck out his hideous old mother—at least so he said.

Finally, the last of many pleasant parties was held at the house of Dr. Houghton; and when, after a merry dinner, our health was drunk by these friends of travel whom we were never probably to see again, if, in the confusion always attending an Englishman upon such occasions, our verbal response failed fully to express our grateful sense of a thousand acts of courtesy and consideration, our hosts may be assured that the want of

* A "Nikodah" is a merchant possessing seagoing craft.

words alone prevented us from showing the feeling we entertained.

And then after many a song and toast we returned across the river to our bungalow. The moon hung above us in a cloudless vault of hazy blue—the water rippled past in a network of silver threads—along the Chinese quarter the polished fronds of the cocoa-nuts glittered and glimmered in the stilly light, and the tall penang palms hung their graceful heads like black banners against the sky. Far up the stream appeared the great ridge of Matang, and many another untraversed hill raised its mysterious crest along the horizon; strangely soft and thrilling the scene appeared upon the eve of our parting, and we felt half tempted to envy those whose lives were destined to pass in this lovely desert.

Nevertheless, drowsiness eventually proved too strong for sentiment, and as we turned into our mosquito curtains we reflected with some satisfaction upon the sterling English comforts we were so soon to enjoy again.

In the morning we bade a final adieu to the Tuan Mudah and the lady residents of Kuching, and at noon we embarked in the *Rainbow* for Singapore, accompanied by four Hadgis and numerous Malays, Chinamen, and Klings. Nearly all the population of the capital came down to the wharf, but whether this imposing ceremony was in our honour, or in that of the influential personages departing on the sacred journey, we did not care to investigate at the moment, and the opportunity is now lost.

Here our travels end. It would be of little interest to tell how we embarked on the *Messageries Imperiales* at Singapore; how we talked wondrous Latin to the worthy old Spanish priest, our fellow-passenger, who burned to convert every heretic on board, but could speak no living tongue save his own; how we broke two hundred and ninety cogs of our "driving wheel" off the coast of Ceylon; how we ran to shore in a tiny catamaran up to our waists in sprats and shell-fish; how we set out to walk to Galle through the cocoa-nut groves, but were compelled to make a modest and even insignificant entry, enthroned on a sort of milk cart; how we were detained many days in the island, and offered ourselves as willing victims to the enterprising jewellers of Colombo; how we made a great plum-pudding for Christmas-day, which came to table with the consistency of pea-soup; how we were swindled at Aden in a speculation of ostrich feathers, and on arrival at Suez were put to bed for the night upon the tables in the courtyard of Zach's Hotel; how we ran the gauntlet of Cairene bazaars, and put to strange uses the Arabic acquired in a former course of Nile travel; how we reached that heaven of Indian voyagers, Paris, and did the Carnival there; all these things which occur more or less to every traveller are not to be written in this book.

In conclusion, I would recommend most strongly to any reader meditating an Eastern journey (be-

yond Suez), whether for business or pleasure, to take the French line of steamers at any inconvenience, rather than place himself in the hands of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. By the latter line we went out; by the former we returned. In the one every passenger was discontented and miserable; in the other, it was unanimously admitted that the most captious could find no fault, except the insufficiency of bathing accommodation, in which the Peninsular and Oriental Company itself can boast no great superiority.

And let not the English traveller fear that he will feel himself alone among a number of French or foreign voyagers. He will always find his countrymen in a very large majority on board the *Messageries*, and I never met with an Englishman who had experienced the two systems, who did not readily admit, at some sacrifice of national pride, that the French line of steamers was preferable in every respect to that which it so dangerously rivals.

THE END.

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